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A Little Girl

Charles Dennis Salmon



Say! Is that a little girl
in your eyes, I see,
All soft and pretty
and sweet as can be?
Yes! I'm certain I see her
there,
Precious sparkling eyes,
skin so fair;
Just a fleeting glimpse and quickly gone,
A hiding place not so easily known
In a world taken with shallow things,
Too little time for the joy she brings,
So she hides within your heart today
And we've lost something special, I'd say,
Laughter and innocence, wonder and zeal,
An angelic nature, purity that is real,
These and more, a wealth to be had,
That they are lost is painful and sad,
For God gave to us such a noble gift
To delight the soul and the heart to lift,
So let the somber yoke of maturity be broken
And the heart-language of a little girl be spoken,
That the world may be filled with her cheer
And that her trusting love may arrest our fears.

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU (ROMANS 16:16).



GREAT TREASURE

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

Jesus gave many parables to define and explain the kingdom or the church that was to be established. Two of these are very similar. Jesus said, *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it"* (Matthew 13:44-46).

In today's terminology, a parable would be classified as an illustration. It involves taking something earthly, something of a material nature, and drawing from it a spiritual lesson. In the two parables just quoted, Jesus spoke of the kingdom or church being like a treasure hidden in a field. An earthly treasure is something very important, precious as silver, gold, or jewels, something that is very expensive. In this case the treasure is something that was hidden in a field and had gone unobserved. Others did not see it, or else when they saw it, they did not recognize what it was, and the value of it, and therefore they passed over it. But either by searching, or just casually coming across it, this particular person finds the treasure. Seeing it, and being aware of its great value, he hides it again and with joy he goes and sells all that he has so he can buy that field. Once the field is bought, the treasure becomes his to deal with as he chooses.

The second parable is much like the first one, except in this case this man is looking for a pearl of great price. He is not simply looking for a pearl, just any pearl, but he wants a *special* pearl, one that is worth more than all the rest. He is a merchant, a businessman, and he knows what he is looking for. His search is rewarded with success. Once he finds the choice pearl, he goes and sells all that he has so that he can buy that pearl of great price. It is now his to do with it as he wishes. He can keep it, show it to others, or sell it and make a big profit.

Now we are all familiar with such stories, of those who go out into the world and buy real estate and sell it for profit, and become rich. Or it could be coming up with an oil well, buying a tract of timber and selling it, building a Wal-Mart and a Sam's, or a Microsoft, and other profitable ventures. Why is it that some succeed in these areas but most do not? Well, it is according to what you are looking for, the vision that you have, what you are willing to put into the search and the achievement. Bottom line, most people actually are pretty well satisfied with where they are and with what they have. They, therefore, seldom move a great deal, either up or down, and they seldom find any "treasure".

Spiritually, the kingdom, the church, God's truth is that treasure. It is out there in the world and always has been there. It is not just *any* church, *some* church, or *one of the churches.* If that is all one is interested in, he will never find the real treasure.

But consider the facts concerning the kingdom or the Lord's church, the one we read about in the Bible. Ever since it was established in Jerusalem by our Lord (Acts 2), it has existed somewhere in the world right on up to the present time, and it will continue to exist for all time and eternity (Luke 1:33 and 1 Corinthians 15:24).

In spite of that fact, and as clearly and distinctly as the church is described in the scripture, the masses never find it. Why? Because the majority are not deeply interested, or they are not looking, and they wouldn't recognized it for what it is even if they did find it. The masses of humanity go in every direction, and look in every place, and remain blind to the real treasure, not wanting to accept it for what it is, being easily deceived, and ending up settling for a counterfeit treasure — a church *begun* by men, *governed* by men, and *living under promises no greater than their founders themselves can fulfill.* Traditions of men and man-made religion are the order of the day. What is called treasure is no

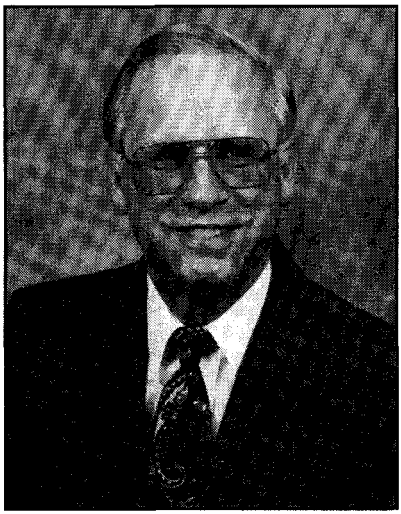
treasure at all. The religions of men are not worth one's effort, devotion, and the great price that is paid for following them.

Jesus said, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"* (Matthew 7:21-23).

Can we, today, find that great treasure of which Jesus spoke? We can if we will but look for it, if we will read and study God's word, with a deep and abiding love of the truth. It is that plain and simple. When the treasure is sincerely sought, found, and the value of it is recognized, the searcher will be willing to give up any and everything standing between him and the treasure, and he will be willing to do whatever is necessary to obey God and obtain the treasure. He will be willing to believe in the Lord, repent of his sins, to confess Christ as the Son of God, and to be baptized to wash away his sins, to become a member of the Lord's church. No, he will not gripe, complain, and argue with the Lord or with anyone else about these matters. His attitude will be, "Lord, you command, and I will obey." Then when he has found that treasure and made it his own, he will want to keep the treasure by doing the Lord's bidding in all things. Will there be any rewards? Jesus said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you"* (Matthew 6:33).

Just imagine finally having that greatest treasure: the kingdom, the church, the truth, resulting in a saved soul and the hope of eternal life! How wonderful to know that the owner of the treasure stands on the *promises of God* because he has done God's will. How wonderful to know that he is a member of the one church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18), the one bride for which Christ died (Ephesians 5:25), the body of people of which He is saviour (Ephesians 5:23), and the church for which he is coming back one day, to deliver it up to God where we shall ever be with the Lord. (I Corinthians 15:23,24).

What is your treasure? Have you found the treasure Jesus talked about? Have you made that treasure your own? You can, and must, if you want to have the treasure of eternal life. ✝



FROM OUT OF THE PAST

Byron Nichols

I recently had one of the most exciting experiences that I have had in a long time. Several months ago another preacher and I were discussing several books dealing with the history of the church, and he mentioned one that was entirely new to me. He said that it is extremely rare, having been published in 1805. My interest was immediately stirred. A short time later I was visiting with my friend Dr. Sam Hester of Freed-Hardeman University, who teaches church history. He also has reprinted several out-of-print books on church history. As I told him about this book, he said that he too would love to see this book. To shorten the story just a little, Dr. Hester has now reprinted the book and a limited number of copies are available. After presenting a review of this book at Freed-Hardeman University, I was encouraged to write about this rare jewel and its significance in ***The Voice of Truth International***. Thus, let me share with you some of what caused me to be so excited about this very special book.

The short version of the title is **Social Worship,** but the complete title is **A View of the Social Worship and Ordinances Observed by the First Christians, Drawn From the Sacred Scriptures Alone: Being An Attempt To Enforce Their Divine Obligation; And To Represent the Guilt and Evil Consequences of Neglecting Them.** The author was James Alexander Haldane of Scotland. Haldane and his brother Robert became very effective and influential leaders in the religious independence movement that was taking place in Scotland during that time. They, and a growing number of others, were convinced that congregations should be self-governing, and free from the abuses and coercion of the clergy system and the hierarchy of the established state church, the Church of Scotland. They led

in turning many people back to a dedicated study of the Scriptures and to a reliance upon the Scriptures as their source of authority in all matters pertaining to worship and religion in general.

Haldane was greatly distressed because of the religious division that existed. (How much more greatly distressed he would be if he were living in the midst of today's religious division!) He was deeply committed to the idea of rejecting the creeds and preferences of men in favor of adhering only to the will and the Word of God. The reader of this book must keep in mind the fact that the author had known only the Church of Scotland, and because of his increasing commitment to the Bible only, he had been forced to leave the established church. He then pursued more vigorously the establishment of independent congregations which chose to follow the Bible alone, as best they understood it. He wrote in the Preface, page v, "This book is not intended as a standard for the order of any church of Christ. Should it be adopted as such, the views of the writer would be thereby completely defeated. His design is to excite his brethren in Christ to study the Scriptures on this and every other subject, and to appeal only to the law and to the testimony. In so far as it produces this effect, his object will be gained." He later wrote, "It is high time to shake off that temper of mind which indisposes us for the investigation of truth; which leads us to cherish the prejudices we have received from our fathers, and which renders us unwilling to go beyond them on any subject" (page 15). He further stated that it is not enough that we be connected with a church, "it must also have the same constitution, and be governed by the same laws with the churches of the New Testament" (page 382). He believed it to be of great importance that folks "should separate from churches, the constitution of which is essentially different from that of the apostolic churches" (page 383). Oh how much this same message needs to be shared with the world today!

Haldane included much in his book on the subject of worship, as the title would indicate. Among the many good things that he had to say were these words: "A further presumption that the New Testament contains a complete system of regulations for Christian worship, arises from God's dealings towards men in every age. We have nothing recorded which leads us to suppose, that ever God left his worshippers to their own discretion, respecting the manner of worshipping him. In every age, the substance of his law to his people was *'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.'* But their obedience to his commandments was ever the proof of their love. These commandments not only respected their duty to men, but the manner in which God was to be worshipped, and what ceremonies were to be observed by them" (pages 26 and 27). Surely this is still a very perti-

nent observation to be considered today.

It is indeed noteworthy that Haldane had a definite influence on the thinking of both Thomas Campbell and his more famous son, Alexander. Both of these leaders of the movement in America in the early 1800's, to return to a reliance upon the Bible alone in determining God's will for man, acknowledged their high regard for James Haldane and his advocacy of the things already pointed out in this review. Robert Richardson, in his **Memoirs of Alexander Campbell,** spoke of the Haldanes' movement "from which Mr. Campbell received his first impulse as a religious reformer, and which may be justly regarded, indeed, as the *first phase* of that religious reformation which he subsequently carried out so successfully to its legitimate issues" (page 149). Richardson makes reference to Haldane's book, "which quickly ran through two editions," and to other pamphlets written by Haldane.

James Haldane's preaching and writing also impacted other great restoration leaders in America during that same period of time. Robert H. Brumback wrote a book entitled **History of the Church Through The Ages,** in which he tells of Walter Scott coming to America (New York) from Scotland in 1818. Brumback wrote, "A year later he went to Pittsburgh where he became a teacher in the school of George Forrester. Forrester, also a native of Scotland, had been greatly influenced by the teaching of the Haldane brothers. He had become the preacher for a small group of Independents. Scott had been reared in the Presbyterian church, and the religious atmosphere among the Independents was altogether different. The Haldanes had preached the restoration of the New Testament, the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, baptism by immersion, a plurality of elders and the edification of the church by the members. All of these points were part of the doctrine and practice of the Independent church in Pittsburgh. Scott attended the services of this group and became convinced that they were following the New Testament pattern and was baptized and shortly thereafter began to preach occasionally in the Independent church" (page 327).

James Haldane had great conviction and courage. He was fallible, but he still proved to be worthy of our unending admiration and gratitude. The magnitude of his contributions to the spiritual development of every generation since the early 1800's is immeasurable. May God be thanked for Haldane's leadership in helping so many to worship the Almighty in keeping with the New Testament pattern.

A limited number of copies of this valuable book are available. If interested, you may contact either this writer or Dr. Sam Hester at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee. ✞

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THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

While talking with a young brother recently, he said he was visiting a congregation in Spokane, WA, and noticed that they were displaying copies of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL.** He said, "The congregation was new to me, but it was such a welcomed reassurance when I saw your magazine!"

We were thrilled to know that the brethren in Spokane are using the magazine, and we are also thrilled to know that its reputation for its stand on the word of God has established its credibility in the eyes of brethren, so that it can, in turn, serve as a recommendation for far-flung congregations, during this time of change and error. May we always be known for TRUTH. **— JCC**

"It's All Right"

When you were little
— a baby at my heels —
And you stumbled,
I could pick you up
And brush you off
And restore your world with,
"It's **all right,** Honey."

And older,
When some friend said cutting words
Or you cried in disappointment,
Still, I could wipe away the tears
And heal the hurt with,
"Don't worry, Honey. It's **all right.**"

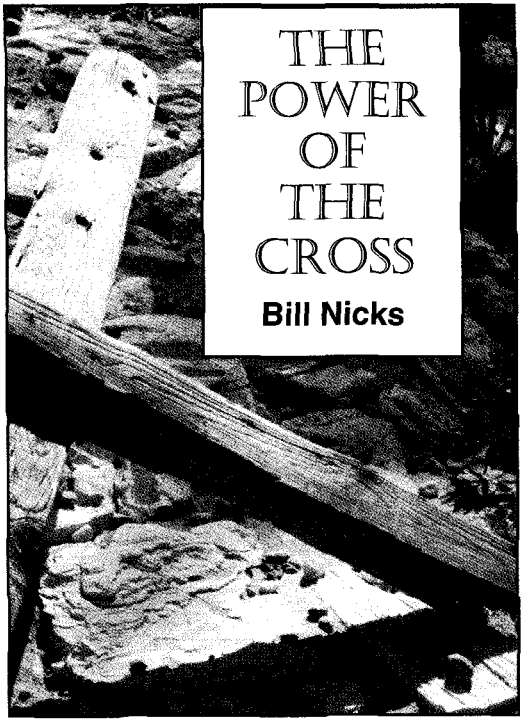
The words had lost a lot in teenage years
When the heart became involved
And you had to wait for weeks
— sometimes for months —
For broken dreams to mend
And to believe again,
"It's **all right,** Honey."

We're older now;
Our worlds, our hurts, have changed;
They're so much deeper
And so much more involved;
Sometimes no kiss,
No reassuring pat,
No words can change the wrong to right.

Oh, my little one,
I long to stop the anguished sobs,
To take away the grief
That fills your haunted eyes;
I long to turn back time
Until the words would work again:
"Don't worry, Honey. It's **all right.**"

But God can make it so.

— Betty Burton Choate



THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Bill Nicks

The cross of Christ has always been a stumbling block, an offense, to many (1 Peter 2:8; 1 Corinthians 1:23). The Jews reasoned, "How could one who was accursed to hang on a tree be the Messiah?" (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13). The Gentiles reasoned, "How could anyone worship a god who was condemned by the Romans to crucifixion?" So, He was rejected by both.

But Paul affirmed, *"God made Him* [Christ] *who knew no sin to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Because of Jesus, no word is more widely known than the "cross". It symbolizes the depths of man's ignorance and sin. Had the rulers and princes known who He was, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (Acts 3:17; 1 Corinthians 2:8). Though willful ignorance was signified in His crucifixion, it also symbolized the mercy and love of God (Romans 5:8).

The cross is paradoxical.

- It was the most *tragic* event in history, yet it was the most *wonderful.*
- It was the *saddest* spectacle ever beheld, yet it produced the greatest *joy.*
- It was Satan's greatest *victory,* yet Christ's most stunning *defeat.*
- It was Satan's greatest *defeat,* yet Christ's most glorious *victory.*
- Christ *won* by *losing* and *conquered* by *surrendering.*
- God's justice *condemned sin* in His flesh, but in His mercy He *forgave sin.*
- From a human standpoint, it was *foolishness,* yet it was a revelation of the highest *wisdom* of God (Galatians 6:14, 2:20).

"Blood is not dignified," said a modernist preacher, so they deleted the word from all their songs. They did not believe there was atoning power in the blood. One who heard it said, "I'm not ashamed of blood. My mother pushed me and my brother off a railroad track to save us, while her blood was spread for yards up and down the track. She gave her precious blood to save us."

"Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18). There is power in the blood of Christ. I know, because my Bible tells me so! No fact is more plainly revealed (Matthew 26:28; 20:28; Acts 2:38; Hebrews 2:9). Animal blood cannot now atone (Hebrews 9:26; 10:1-4). Even the vilest human may be saved by the "wonder working power of the blood." (Colossians 1:20-22; Ephesians 2:3-6).

Our Lord's death was not accidental, it was foreknown, typified by the passover lamb (Exodus 12; John 1:29; Isaiah. 53:7-12; Matthew 8:17; Acts 8:32).

The following things were accomplished by His death:

1. He **purchased** the kingdom, the church (Acts 20:28).
2. He **reconciled** Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:16).
3. He **effected atonement** for sin (1 John 2:1; 4:10).
4. He **repealed** the old covenant to establish the new (Hebrews 9:15-17; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20).
5. He **destroyed** Satan's power (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8).
6. He **delivered** all who were in bondage to fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

Salvation has been made available to all, yet not all will be saved because some reject, and others neglect, the great salvation (Hebrews 2:3). Like Naaman of old, many have preconceived notions (2 Kings 5:1-14). God wants all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9), but they must enter at the *"strait gate"* and travel *"the narrow way"* (Matthew 7:13).

If we are to please God, all we do must be centered around the cross; whether conditions of pardon, worship, or our daily walk of life. We cannot choose our own path, we cannot direct our own steps. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6). **And the way of Christ was the cross.** ✞

Bill Nicks is a missionary in residence on the staff of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, USA.

Respecting God and His Authority

Maxie B. Boren

Over and again in the Scriptures we are taught to respect God and His authority. We must not trifle with His Word. What He says "do" we are to do, and we are not to go beyond His instruction. How many times must it be "spelled out" for folk until they get the message? Let us note just a few examples:

The case of Noah and the ark.

God told Noah what He wanted him to build, the wood to use, etc., and Noah, through faith, did what God told him to do (read carefully Genesis 6:5-22 and Hebrews 11:6-7). Is there any reason for anyone not to understand the inspired record on this matter? God, as the Supreme Sovereign of the universe, certainly has the prerogative of giving instruction to the creature, man, whom He created. Man's response must be one of believing in and trusting God, and doing what the Creator has told him to do. This is clearly evident in the case of Noah and the ark. God told Noah what to do, and Noah, through faith, did it. Noah was thus saved from death in the floodwaters. But what if he had not believed God, and had not built the ark as God had directed? Would he not have perished in the flood the same as the others (note Genesis 7:21-23)? Certainly so!

The case of Nadab and Abihu.

These two sons of Aaron, in offering sacrifice to God, obviously went beyond Divine instruction, acted presumptuously, and offered "strange fire" (or "unholy fire" RSV: "profane fire" NKJV). Scholars agree that whatever this "fire" might have been, it was something other than or in addition to what God had authorized. And that's exactly the point at hand. Because they went beyond God's directive and failed to sanctify God before the people, Jehovah consumed them with fire (Leviticus 10:1,2). The apostle Paul wrote, *"Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning"* (Romans 15:4). What do you suppose we should learn from that?

Joshua and the children of Israel were "given" the city of

Jericho by God, but the gift was predicated upon their believing Him and doing what He said to do (read carefully Joshua 6 and 7).

The orders God gave in that situation may not have appealed to the intellect of Joshua or his military leaders, and they themselves would probably never have devised such tactics for taking the city of Jericho. But unquestionably God gave these instructions to see if Joshua and the people of Israel would obey Him. When they did, God kept His promise and gave them the victory over Jericho.

But what if they had scoffed at God's commands and had chosen NOT to obey Him? Do you think God would have given them the city anyway? The Bible declares concerning the matter: *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days"* (Hebrews 11: 30).

The case of Naaman, the leper

Naaman was healed by God's power, through the instructions of the prophet Elisha, *only when he did exactly what he was told to do.* Read carefully 2 Kings 5:1-15. What if Naaman had refused to yield and had not obeyed? Would God have healed him of his leprosy regardless? I think we all know the answer to that question.

When it comes to Christianity, the New Testament plainly teaches that God gave Christ all authority (read Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:20-23). The Lord charged His apostles to *"go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned"* Mark 16:15-16). Remember, Christ has all authority. And He clearly taught the conditions of salvation, that one must believe the Gospel and obey it by being baptized. Is that hard to understand?

For Christians, the principle is the same. Our **faith** in God must be strong (Hebrews 11:6), and we must **trust** Him in directing our course. (Note the principle of Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 3:5,6; Luke 5:4,5.) We must **obey** Him as He directs us through His Word. *Continuing faith* and *continuing obedience* are what we are taught over and over again in the New Testament (note Acts 27:25 as but one example of Christian faith, and 1 Peter 1:14 as one example of Christian obedience).

Let us emulate the example of Samuel of old when he spoke to God and said, *"Speak; for thy servant heareth"* (1 Samuel 3:9). And the greatest example of all ... Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, *"Your will be done"* (Matthew 26:42). ✝

Maxie B. Boren preaches for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, USA.

5 Top Questions for Unbelievers

Dalton Key

Question Five

Assuming, for argument's sake, the accuracy of the Big Bang theory concerning the origin of the universe, and assuming also that such an event occurred by natural, uncaused means, in the absence of a God which you contend does not even exist, from whence came the *energy* and *matter* necessary for the Big Bang's occurrence?

Question Four

How many times, and under what circumstances, has science observed and documented the phenomenon of *nothing,* given *enough time,* becoming *something?*

Question Three

If life began accidentally, without the aid of any higher intelligence, and then evolved into the many and varied living forms now existing, why are we — supposedly occupying the highest rung on the evolutionary ladder, and possessing the culminated intelligence of millions of years in the evolving — still unable to create life? Why are we unable to duplicate, through *intelligence,* that which you attribute to *mindless change?*

Question Two

Which would seem a safer world for you and your children — one where God's existence and presumed influence are acknowledged, or one where such intelligence is categorically denied? (Be honest — would you prefer your child's high school classmates to be Creationists or Nihilists?)

Question One

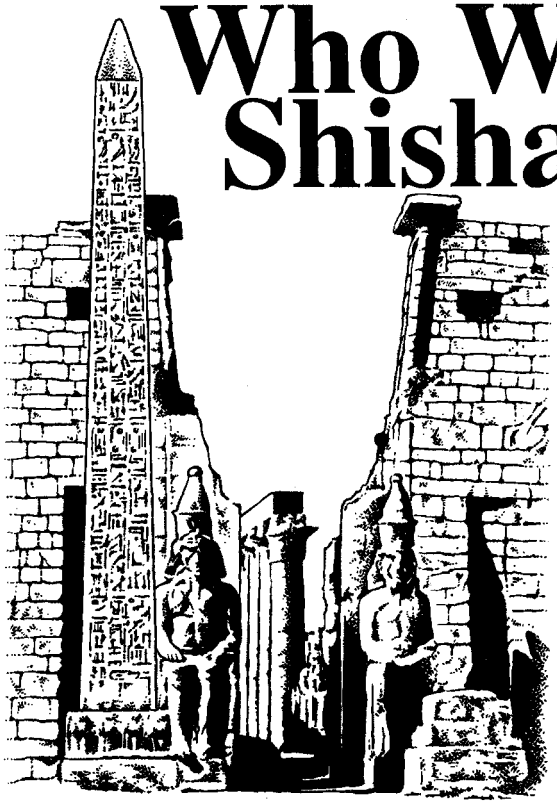
If God does not exist, and if we thus have no moral code issuing forth from God, what is your basis for determining murder to be wrong? Many animals eat their young, kill for the sake of food, mating rights, and territory, and think nothing of it. If we are just a marginally higher form of life than they, *upon what basis do you hold yourself — and others — to a higher moral code?*

Don't you think it's about time the unbelievers were forced to take a defensive posture? *"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'"* (Psalm 14:1). ✞

Dalton Key is editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the North Amarillo Church of Christ in Amarillo, Texas, USA.

Who Was Shishak, Anyway?

Harvey Porter



After Solomon's death in 931 B.C., his son Rehoboam took the throne to reign over Israel. It was not long until the ten tribes to the north rebelled against Rehoboam and took the name "Israel" for their country. The two tribes that remained under Rehoboam's rule, Benjamin and Judah, chose the name "Judah" for their country.

The Old Testament tells us that Solomon had exiled a young rebellious man named Jeroboam to Egypt. Now that Solomon was dead, Jeroboam came out of exile and was chosen to rule over the northern kingdom of Israel. There were no good feelings between Israel and Judah, nor Jeroboam and Rehoboam. No doubt Jeroboam was on good terms with the Pharoah of Egypt, who was named Shishak. Could he have encouraged Shishak to raid Jerusalem and take spoils from Rehoboam and the golden shields from the Temple? We cannot prove that supposition, but it appears to be a logical conclusion.

At any rate, the Bible gives us the following record: *"After Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel (Judah) with him abandoned the law of the Lord. Because they had been unfaithful to the Lord, Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam. With twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen and the innumerable troops of Libyans, Sukkites and Cushites that came with him from Egypt, he captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem"* (2 Chronicles 12:1-4).

The complimentary account of 1 Kings says, *"In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem. He carried off the treasures of the temple of the Lord and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made"* (1 Kings 14:25,26).

This campaign was a great victory for Shishak. The date was probably 925 B.C. Shishak was so proud of his victory that he recorded this on the south wall of one of the massive temples at Thebes, the southern capital of Egypt, now called Karnak. The inscription gives a list of the many towns he conquered on this campaign.

Archaeology has in recent years produced many confirmations like this of the historical persons, events, and places of the Old and New Testaments. It should be borne in mind that all of the corroborations between the biblical account and the accounts of the nations who were contemporaneous with Israel were written by those who were the enemies of Israel. These accounts by the enemies of Israel are sometimes exaggerated as to how great a victory was won by the enemy king or army. It should be noted, however, that these historical accounts by the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and others which tell of the same person or persons, the same event, at the same place give undeniable proof of the historical trustworthiness of the Scriptures.

For hundreds of years no one knew who Shishak was. The Bible was the only known account of his name and this campaign. When modern scholars learned how to read ancient hieroglyphics, cuneiform, and other ancient writings, we found many obscure names and places in the Bible coming alive to us with authentication.

Remember, however, that the Bible is a spiritual book. This historical verification merely gives us additional reason to believe its wonderful message. ✝

Before his death, Harvey Porter was a noted lecturer in the field of biblical archaeology. He lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.



"Once upon a time in a fabulous, far-away land, a frog was transformed into a handsome prince with just a kiss. . . ."

We call this **"a fairytale."**

"In an equally fabulous, but less far-away land, a single-cell organism was transformed into a man with just a lot of wishful thinking. . . ."

We call this **"The General Theory of Evolution."**

Since no one has ever witnessed the frog-prince transformation or the amoeba-man transformation, and since laboratory confirmation is impossible, it is difficult for many of us to understand why the theory is as popular today with educated men and women as the fairy tale is with children. After all,

- the fossil record stubbornly refuses to provide us with transitional forms;
- mutations (the alleged mechanism for biological change) do not enhance, but rather impair the creature's viability;
- the first and second laws of thermodynamics tell us that our universe is becoming *less* rather than *more* orderly,
- and the geologic evidence mocks every attempt to demonstrate the progressive succession of life from the simple to the complex.

Why, oh why, does the world choose to believe a fairytale?

The answer is, of course, that the *only* alternative to evolution is **special creation,** and the latter implies the existence of a Creator to whom "every *created* thing" is to ascribe *"blessing and honor and glory and dominion"* (Revelation 5:13,14). To borrow from Judges 17:6, Judges 18:1, Judges 19:1, and Judges 21:25, *where there is no king over the land, or indeed over the universe, everyone is free to do what is right in his own eyes* — **ethical**

autonomy. On the other hand, the existence of a Creator-king, whose very nature and word determine ethical standards, means that *man is accountable to One who owns him, body and soul.* And man in his arrogance and pride doesn't like this one little bit!

Adam sought "freedom" in a piece of fruit, Darwin and his disciples in the theory of evolution. In the words of philosopher G.L. Bahnsen, "...Evolutionary thought is popular because it is a worldview which facilitates man's attempt to rid himself of all knowledge of the transcendent Creator and promises to secure man's autonomy. . . ."

The truth of this statement is seen in the following citation from the *Humanist Manifesto II*:

"...We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stem from human need and interest."

In truth,

"...man is the measure of all things," a source of deep pride for the humanist whose Manifesto states: "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."

But for all his talk about "human need and interest," the materialist must face the unpalatable fact that the theory of evolution readily lends itself to the justification of many obscene doctrines which threaten to enslave and debase the human spirit.

Consider racism for example.

- "It is well known that Darwin and Huxley as well as Haeckel, believed in white supremacy, as did practically all the 19th century evolutionary scientists" (Henry Morris: **History of Modern Creationism**).
- Equally embarrassing to the modern evolutionist is the fact that Laissez-faire capitalism with its emphasis on "survival of the fittest" owed its origin to evolutionary ideas, as did the militaristic fascism of Hitler and the bloody revolutionism of Marx and Engels.

Tell a man that he's an animal and he'll act like one — tell him that he and his fellow men are created in the image of God, and every man becomes a brother and every life a precious immortal spark. Yes, it really does matter what we believe about human origins. ✞

Rex Banks works with the church of Christ in New Zealand.

DIARY OF A BIBLE

JANUARY: A busy time for me. Most of the family decided to read me through this year. They kept me busy the first two weeks, but they have forgotten me now.

FEBRUARY: Clean up time. I was dusted yesterday and put in my place. My owner did use me for a few minutes last week. He had been in an argument and was looking up some references to prove he was right.

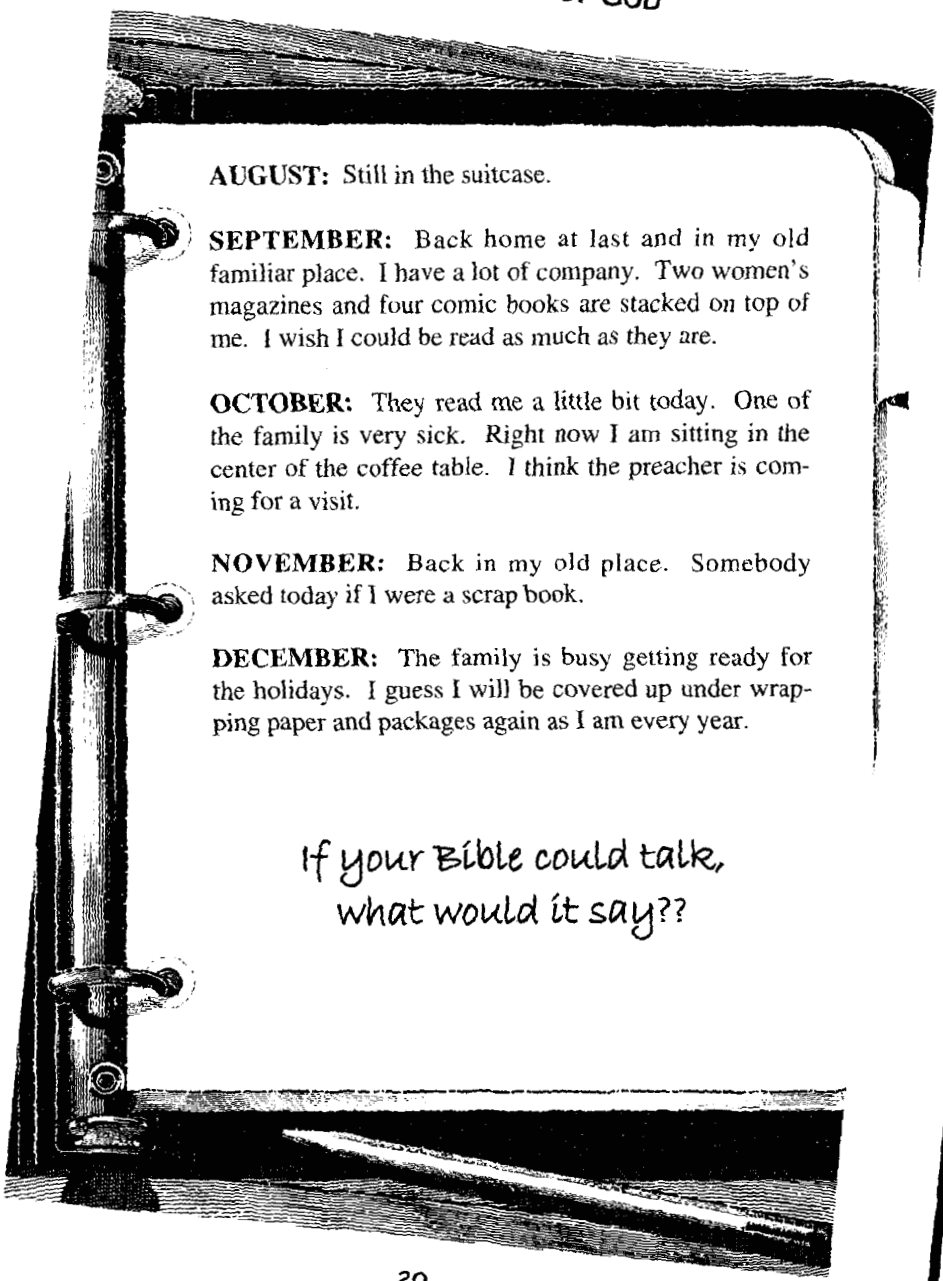
MARCH: I had a busy day the first of the month. My owner was elected president of the P.T.A., and he used me to prepare a speech.

APRIL: Grandpa visited us this month. He kept me on his lap for an hour reading 1 Corinthians 13. He seems to think more of me than do some in my own household.

MAY: I have a few green stains because some spring flowers were pressed in my pages.

JUNE: I look like a scrapbook. They stuffed me full of newspaper clippings — one of the girls was married.

JULY: They put me in a suitcase today. I guess we are off on a vacation. I wish I could stay home; I know I'll be closed up in this thing for at least two weeks.



AUGUST: Still in the suitcase.

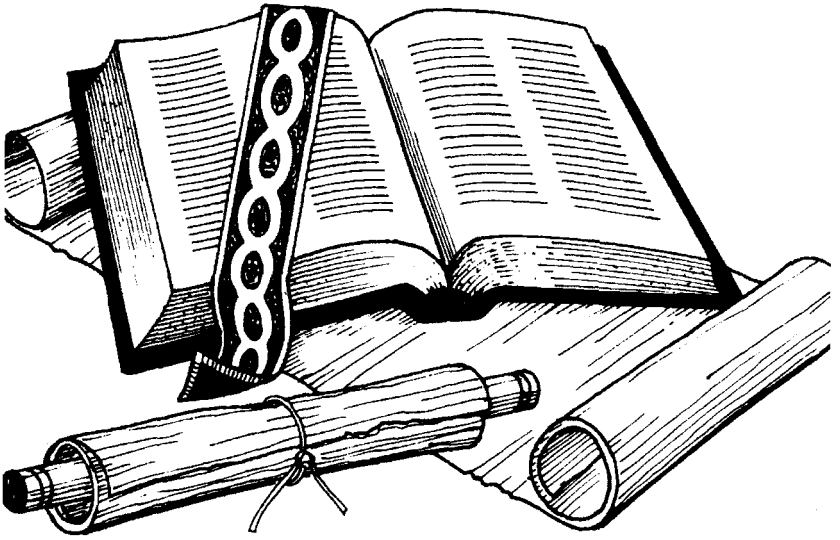
SEPTEMBER: Back home at last and in my old familiar place. I have a lot of company. Two women's magazines and four comic books are stacked on top of me. I wish I could be read as much as they are.

OCTOBER: They read me a little bit today. One of the family is very sick. Right now I am sitting in the center of the coffee table. I think the preacher is coming for a visit.

NOVEMBER: Back in my old place. Somebody asked today if I were a scrap book.

DECEMBER: The family is busy getting ready for the holidays. I guess I will be covered up under wrapping paper and packages again as I am every year.

If your Bible could talk,
what would it say??



There Is Only One Creed

Gary C. Hampton

The word "creed" comes from the Latin word "credo," which means, "I believe." Webster's Dictionary defines it as, "A statement of religious belief; a confession of faith."

Obviously, everyone who has a set of religious beliefs has a creed. That creed may come from the statements of belief of an individual or a council. It may be plainly called a creed, manual, catechism, prayer book, discipline, or some other name. We would suggest that the only acceptable creed is the Bible itself, since God is its author (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Jesus is God's spokesman for today (Hebrews 1:1,2). Moses and Elijah appeared on the mount of transfiguration with Christ. Moses stood for the law, while Elijah represented the prophets, and Christ is the testator of His new will. On that momentous occasion, Peter wanted to build three tabernacles, one to honor each man. However, God caused a bright cloud to overshadow the disciples, and He spoke from that cloud, saying, *"This is my beloved*

Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:1-5).

Jesus acted in accord with the Father's will and spoke the words God gave Him to speak (John 12:44-50). He promised His disciples that when He returned to heaven, He would send the Holy Ghost to remind them of His words. The Spirit would guide them in all the things Jesus would have them to teach (John 16:7-14). Thus, it can be said that the apostles spoke in accordance with God's will, and God confirmed their message by the miracles He worked through them (Hebrews 2:3,4).

Included in the promise to the disciples in John 16 was Jesus' assurance that the Spirit would guide them into all truth (verse 13). This He did. Jude wrote to the early Christians, encouraging them to *"contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3). Peter said God had given them ***"all things** that pertain unto life and godliness"* (2 Peter 3:1).

Paul urged Timothy to continue in the teachings his mother and grandmother had started him in. He assured Timothy that the Scriptures were the God-breathed Word, and that the man of God can be perfected by them in every good work (2 Timothy 3:14-17). Paul told the Philippians to *"walk by the same rule"* (Philippians 3:16). He told the Galatian brethren that it was this rule that had made them new creatures before God (Galatians 6:15,16). So, the rule we are to follow is the law of Christ, which produces that new creature (Ephesians 2:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1,2).

In 1 Peter 4:16 Peter said, *"If any man speak; let him speak as the oracles of God."* Peter's exhortation should be heeded by all. Paul made that clear when he said **the man — or angel — who preached another gospel would be accursed by God** (Galatians 1:6-9).

Human creeds, thus, become unnecessary, and even dangerous.

- **If they add to God's Word, they contain more than God said.**
- **If they take away from God's Word, they are less than God said.**

Either way, they become another gospel and are dangerous to the soul who supports them. If one argues that his man-made creed contains only what God said and all of what God said, then it is the Bible and should not be considered man-made. **Search the scriptures** to learn what God wants us to believe from the only true creed man has. ✞

Gary C. Hampton preaches for the Central Avenue Church of Christ in Valdosta, Georgia, USA.

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Acts 7:55,56

Stephen was one of the seven chosen by the Apostles to do the work of deacons in the Jerusalem church. Through the laying on of the Apostles' hands he was given a miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit and could perform miracles. (6:8)

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles (Acts 2:1-4; John 16:5-15), to guide them in what they taught and to enable them to prove their message by the use of miracles.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Stephen was allowed to see not only the glory of God, as described in Revelation 4:2,3, but he also saw the resurrected Jesus.

Revelation 3:21 and other places describe Jesus as 'sitting'.

'Son of Man' identifies Jesus with humanity, with His brother, Stephen, who was being killed for His sake. The change in wording from 'sitting' to 'standing' is significant, showing that He was wrenched to His feet in concern for His dying brother.

All authority having been given to Christ, according to Matthew 28:18, Jesus sits at God's right hand, Lord over all that is in heaven and on earth, except the Father.



How Narrow-Minded Should We Be?

Carroll Sites

Some folks feel that we in the church are too narrow-minded. As a preacher I have sometimes been accused of being narrow-minded because of insisting upon the Christian forsaking all to follow Christ. But, isn't all of life narrow? Isn't success to be found only by passing through the narrow gate and down the straight way?

Consider these facts:

➪**There is no room for broad-mindedness in the chemical laboratory.** Water is composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. The slightest deviation from that formula is forbidden.

➪**There is no room for**

broad-mindedness in music. There can be but eight steps in an octave. The skilled director will not permit his first violin to play so much as one-half a step off the written note, chord, and key.

•There is no room for broad-mindedness in the mathematics classroom. Neither geometry, calculus, nor trigonometry allows any variation from exact accuracy, even for old-time's sake. The solution of the problem is either right or it is **wrong — no tolerance.**

•There is no room for broad-mindedness in biology. One varying result out of a thousand experiments will invalidate an entire theory.

•There is no room for broad-mindedness on the athletic field. The game is played according to the rules with no favors shown for charity's sake.

•There is no room for broad-mindedness in the garage. The mechanic there says that the piston rings must fit the cylinder walls within one-thousandth part of an inch. Even between friends there cannot be variation, if the motor is to run smoothly.

Now, why is it that we expect broad-mindedness to rule in the realm of religion and morals? Jesus said, *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). He prayed, *"Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth"* (John 17:17). He plainly stated, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it"* (Matthew 7:13,14).

Where do you fit? Which do you choose? ✞

Carroll Sites preaches the Gospel in Higden, Arkansas, USA.

Reach for Heaven

"How can I reach for Heaven?," you say,
"By Jesus, the Light and the Way."
Believe the truth when God's Word you hear,
Confess Jesus Christ without any fear.
Repent and be baptized — this is commanded of you,
For remission of sins and to be raised up anew.
Obey God's commandments every day,
Reach for Heaven by the "Light and the Way".

— Nina Mae Payne Coppa

Will There Be a 1000 Year Reign of Christ on Earth?

Colin McKee

Let us briefly look at several things which prove that Christ will not return to earth to set up a kingdom and rule on David's throne in Jerusalem.

1. Jeremiah prophesied that no one of the lineage of Jeconiah (Coniah) would ever sit on a throne ruling in Judah (Jeremiah 22:24,28-30). Christ directly descended through Jeconiah (Matthew 1:11,12). Therefore Christ cannot be a king on a throne in Judah/Jerusalem.

2. Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20). Melchizedek was priest and king at the same time (Hebrews 7:1). This means that Christ is king and priest at the same time (Zechariah 6:13). If He were on earth He could not be a priest (Hebrews 8:4). Since He is priest and king at the same time, if He were on earth, He also could not be a king!

3. Those sitting on thrones and reigning in Revelation 20, including Christ, are reigning in heaven, not on earth.

a. Those sitting on thrones and reigning in 20:4 are those who, *"had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark...."*

b. Those who have *"victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark"* in 15:2 are standing *"on the sea of glass."* This is the same group of 20:4. The sea of glass is found before the throne of God (4:6) Thus the *"sea of glass"* before the throne of God is located in heaven, not on earth! Therefore those who were seen to be resurrected to sit on thrones and reign with Christ are reigning in heaven, not on earth.

c. All thrones in John's vision, except Satan's throne (2:13), and the throne of the beast (16:10), are seen **in heaven,** not on earth. See:

1:4; 3:21; 4:2,5,6,9,10; 5:1,6,7,11,15,17; 8:3; 11:16; 14:3,5; 16:17; 19:4,5; 20:4,11; 21:5; 22:1,3.

d. "1000 years" is a time figure used to describe a state of affairs and is not to be interpreted as a specific period of time. Those in 20:4 took part in the "first resurrection" (20:5), and the second death has no power over them. But in 2:11 those who overcome are not hurt by the second death. So those over whom the second death has no power are the same people who are not hurt by the second death, they are overcomers, winners, who serve God. The 1000 years is a figure which assured God's people of perfect victory over the persecutors.

e. The things John saw and wrote about in Revelation pertaining to the "1000-year reign" of Christ and His saints are not future events. In 1:1 God said, " ..must SHORTLY take place..". In 1:3 He said, "the time is near..". In 22:6 He said, "things which MUST SHORTLY take place...". In 22:11 He instructed, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for THE TIME IS AT HAND..." Either God, through John, was not telling the truth, or those things have already taken place. I take John at his word since he was inspired of God.

f. Revelation 1:5 identifies Christ as the ruler over the kings of the earth — already, at the beginning of the Revelation! Daniel 7:13,14 says that when Christ ascended to Heaven to the right hand of God, ***"He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."***

g. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 explains further that Christ is reigning **now** as Lord, but that **when the end** comes, *"...He will **deliver the kingdom to God... for He MUST REIGN TILL** He has put all enemies under His feet..."* In none of these passages is an earthly rule or kingdom mentioned or implied.

There is no foundation in Revelation or any other book of the Bible for the concept of a physical millennial kingdom of Christ on earth. Instead, we look forward to the promised *"new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells"* (2 Peter 3:13). ✝

Colin McKee is a missionary of the church of Christ, living in Jakarta, Indonesia.

WHAT ABOUT MODERN-DAY MIRACLES?

Albert Gardner

When I was a boy preacher just starting out, an older woman who was a new Christian said to me, "What about the Holy Spirit? If you can get some of it, I want it." Her relatives had been telling her she needed to have the Holy Spirit and be able to speak in tongues and do other miracles. Her question was that if that power is available now, she wanted it.

Of course, her relatives were mistaken and were trying to lead her astray. Miracles were done by the apostles and others in the first century church. They really did raise the dead, heal the sick, and cleanse lepers, just as the Scriptures say. What they did was the real thing, unlike the deception by TV preachers today. Don't modern-day "miracle workers" always make an appeal for your money so they can continue their lavish lifestyle? Why don't people notice that? Can you imagine one of the apostles knocking people down when they healed them? Or being caught in a frenzy of "holy laughter"? These practices make a mockery of God and of the power of the Holy Spirit.

There were only two ways to receive power to do miracles in the beginning of the church. The Apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2 and 10) and then they gave miraculous gifts to select people by laying their hands on them. Neither of these ways is available to us; therefore, miracles like those recorded in the New Testament are not done through men today.

BAPTISM OF HOLY SPIRIT.

Jesus promised the apostles the Holy Spirit. *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever...But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send*

in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:16,26).

Holy Spirit baptism on the apostles was a **promise,** while water baptism is a **command** (Acts 10:47,48). The apostles received the Spirit to guide them *"into all truth"* because the New Testament had not yet been written (John 16:13). The apostles did perform many miracles, but the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not made to us.

Jesus told the apostles not to depart from Jerusalem, *"but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, you have heard of me"* (Acts 1:4). That is the promise we have just noted in John 14:16. *"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost no many days hence"* (Acts 1:5). He was talking to the apostles, and not to the general public. The apostles did receive the Spirit in just a few days on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and Jesus calls that "baptism of Holy Ghost."

LAYING ON HANDS.

The apostles could lay hands on others and impart the power to do certain miracles. Those who received that gift could not pass it to others.

Philip received laying on hands of the apostles (Acts 6:6), which enabled him to do miracles (Acts 8:6,7), but apostles Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands on some of them (Acts 8:17).

Due to the fact that all the apostles died, we do not have anyone to lay hands on another to impart this power. That means, that when the apostles died, and those died who received laying of hands of the apostles, it is obvious that no one else could get that power. It is not even promised to us.

DURATION OF MIRACLES.

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:10). What is it that is *"in part"*? It is tongues, prophecy, knowledge (verses 8,9). What is it that is perfect? Not Christ, though He is perfect. It does not say when "HE" comes, but when "THAT" which is perfect is come. It is not a person but a thing. It is the completion of the New Testament which is called the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).

When people argue with this view, I reply, "You do not argue with me, but with the Bible." Also, if one has Holy Spirit baptism now, he should be able to do what those did in the Bible who had Holy Spirit baptism. Heal a crippled man who has had deformed and twisted limbs from birth (Acts 3:1-8). Raise the dead (Acts 9:37,41). WHAT DO YOU THINK? ✞

Albert Gardner is a preacher of the Gospel living in Marmaduke, Arkansas, USA.

Baptism

Roger E. Dickson

The word "baptize" (verb) or "baptism" (noun) is used in the New Testament over one hundred times. Thousands of people were baptized in the first century. This subject, therefore, is very important in reference to our covenant relationship with God.

The Greek word *baptizo* that is used in the New Testament is transliterated with the English word "baptize." In a transliteration, the equivalent sounds of the Greek letters are brought over into the English language. *Baptizo* was thus transliterated, "baptize." The original definition of the word *baptizo*, however, is "to dip, plunge, immerse, or overwhelm." The most common definition is "immerse." Therefore, when the words "baptize" or "baptism" are read in the English Bible, immersion is the primary meaning that must be understood. When people were immersed in the first century, they were immersed in "much water" (John 3:23).

Because the Greek word *baptizo* was not translated in early editions of the New Testament, many religious groups today have the practice of sprinkling or pouring and calling it baptism. They have sprinkled either infants or adults, and then taken the words "baptize" or "baptism" from the New Testament and applied them to what they presume to be an action that is sanctioned by God. In doing this, they have affirmed that individuals have been properly baptized, though they have not. This is an unfortunate practice by many religious groups today.

The One Baptism

Throughout the New Testament, six baptisms are mentioned. **(1)** John's immersion (baptism) unto repentance (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4). **(2)** Immersion into the responsibility of leadership (Matthew 20:22,23). **(3)** Immersion with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5). **(4)** Immersion with fire (Matthew 3:11). **(5)** Israel's immersion in the cloud (1 Corinthians 10:1,2). **(6)** Immersion in water for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). When Paul wrote the Ephesian letter in A.D. 62, he proclaimed that there was only one immersion at that time (Ephesians 4:5). This is the immersion in water for forgiveness of sins which we are to obey today. ✝

Roger Dickson is President of the International School of Biblical Studies, based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Things God Hath Joined Together

Sunny David

Just as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit together are the one God (John 1:1,14; John 10:30; Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3,4), so are there some other things which, according to the Bible, God has put together, and **what God has joined together,** according to Matthew 19:6, ***"Let no man separate".***

Let's notice some of those things which God has joined together:

Salvation – Christ – Blood – Church

Salvation is *in* Christ (2 Timothy 2:10), and one is saved *by* the blood of Christ, *in* His church. **Notice:** Christ said in Matthew 16:18, *"I will build My church."* Ephesians 1:22,23 says that the *church* is the *body of Christ,* and Colossians 1:18 says that Christ is the *head* of the church. In Acts 20:28 we read, *the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."* The *blood of Christ* was shed for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28; 1 Peter 1:18-20). The church, which is the spiritual house of God (1 Timothy 3:15) is the blood-bought institution. *Christ and His blood and His church and salvation are joined together.* That is to say, if we *belong* to Christ, then we have been *saved* by His *blood,* and if we have been saved by His blood then we are *in His church.* Those whose sins are forgiven by the blood of Christ are saved from sins, and Christ adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:38,47). There are no Christians, therefore, outside of the church of Christ.

Belief – Repentance – Confession – Baptism – Salvation

To be *saved in* Christ, the Bible says, one must *believe* in Christ and *repent* of sins and *confess* Christ to be the Son of God and be *baptized*

for the forgiveness of sins. None of these things can be separated from *salvation,* since God has put them together. **Notice:** Christ, the Savior, said in Mark 16:16 that *one must believe and be baptized* ***to be*** *saved.* In Acts 2:38 Peter, the apostle, said to *repent* and be *baptized* for the *remission* of sins.

After hearing the gospel of Christ the eunuch wanted to be baptized to be saved. Philip, however, did not baptize him at that point, but he told the eunuch, *"If you believe with all your heart, you may."* The eunuch then made the confession, saying, *"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* At that time, Philip baptized the eunuch in water (Acts 8:35-39).

To be saved from sin, therefore, after *hearing* the gospel of Christ, one must *believe* in Christ, *repent* of sins, *confess* the name of Christ, and be *baptized* or immersed for the *forgiveness* of sins.

Death – Resurrection – Judgment – Eternity

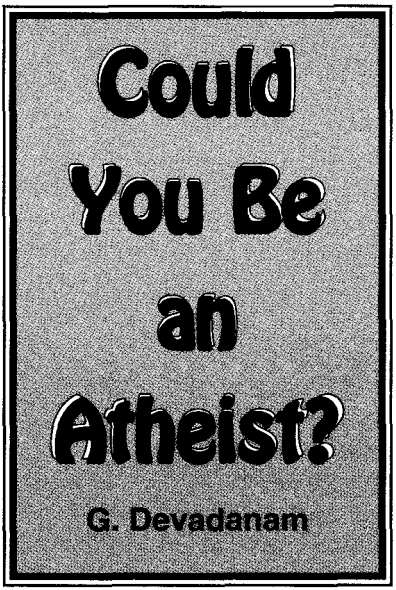
Also, joined together by God are *death* and *resurrection* and *judgment* and *eternity.* According to Hebrews 9:27, God has appointed for all men to die once and then face His judgment. God will judge all one day through Christ (Acts 17:30,31). Christ said, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). The last day, which is the day of judgment, is also the day of resurrection, when all the dead will be raised by the power of God.

Again, Christ said, *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the grave will hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation"* (John 5:28,29). He also said, concerning the evil or the wicked ones, *"And those will go away into everlasting punishment",* but the saved or the righteous, Christ said, will enter *into eternal life"* (Matthew 25:46). Both the punishment of sinners in hell, and the salvation of the saved ones in heaven, are everlasting or eternal. For all, *death* is certain, and so are the *resurrection* of all from the dead and their appearing before God in the *judgment* after resurrection, after which all souls will exist eternally either in heaven or in hell.

God has put these things together; let no man think himself great enough to try to separate them. The final word in judgment **will be God's Word.** *He has spoken.* ✝

Sunny David is a preacher of the Gospel in New Delhi, India.

To one who is a believer in Christ the question may seem a strange one to ask, but it is imperative that we consider this Biblical concept. Why? In order to check up on our own position before it could be too late! After all, when Christ appears in flaming fire to take vengeance, the first victims are going to be those *"who know not God"* (1 Thessalonians 1:6,7).



In a **general sense,** an atheist is one who professes atheism or disbelief in God. Early Christians were repeatedly accused of being atheists for their *disbelief* in the gods of heathenism, and for the fact that they could show no visible "god" that they served.

But that is not the sense in which we are asking the question.

There are **philosophic atheists,** who, while accepting the ultimate First Cause, deny the existence of a personal God! Such people, also, are not in our discussion here.

There is another type of atheism known as **practical atheism.** It is on this form of unbelief that we would like to focus our attention in this study.

Truly, there is no excuse whatever for being an atheist of any kind (Romans 1:19,20), because *the creation itself clearly teaches man the undeniable existence of God!* If he looks up, *"The heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of His hands"* (Psalm 19:1). And if he looks down, the earth and the things in it educate him concerning God: *"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you, or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In His hand is the soul of every creature and the breath of all mankind"* (Job 12:7-10).

❖ **First,** to believe in God is to acknowledge **His invisible qualities,** *"His eternal power and divine nature"* (Romans 1:20).

❖ **Second,** to believe in God is to acknowledge the fact that He ***"holds in His hand, your life and all your ways"*** (Daniel 5:23), for which man is bound to honor and glorify God, and give Him thanks (Romans 1:21). As the Creator, God is worthy of all this and more (Revelation 4:11). If you can't sincerely **honor and praise God in thanksgiving,** it may be that — at heart — you are an atheist!

❖ **Third,** true love for God and faith in Him would lead one also to **love his fellowman** (1 John 4:7,8). The faith which is not manifested in the works of love is equated with demon's faith and is even said to be useless (James 2:19,20). Simply professing to believe God is not enough. Most people who express disbelief in God do it by their **words,** whereas these display it by their **deeds!** Speaking of such people, the Bible says, *"They claim to **know God,** but by their actions they **deny Him.** They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good"* (Titus 1:16).

❖ **Fourth,** unless one abides in the **doctrine of Christ,** he is said to be **denying God.** "Doctrine of Christ" embraces all of New Testament teaching. It molds one strictly into the New Testament church, for that is the only church — body, family, bride of Christ — that the New Testament speaks of. No matter what one may *claim* about his faith, if he has denominational affiliation, the Word of God is saying that, in essence, that person is an atheist. Notice: *"Anyone who runs ahead and **does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God,"*** Further, *"Whoever **continues in the teaching** has both the Father and the Son"* (2 John 9). Christ Himself says, *"Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God; trust also in Me"* (John 14:1). Praying to the Father, He said, *"Now this is eternal life that they know You, the only true God; and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"* (John 17:3).

While claiming to believe in God, the Jews rejected His Son! Rejecting the Son of God is equated with **rejecting Him Who sent Him** (John 8:16-19).

Many today who claim to believe in Jesus are actually rejecting Him because **they do not follow His teachings.** Concerning such people, Jesus warned, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven* [His church], *but he who **does the will of My Father in heaven.** Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you;*

depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

❖ **Fifth.** Worshipping **idols** in any form amounts to denying God, whether it is *covetousness or greed* (Colossians 3:5), *arrogance or stubbornness* (1 Samuel 15:23), or *worshipping an image of any kind* (Isaiah 44:8-20). Concerning such, it is said, *"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is forever praised. Amen"* (Romans 1:25).

Thus far we have considered aspects of atheism from a biblical perspective. Now we are going to ask ourselves some pertinent questions.

❖ Do we really recognize God's eternal power and divine nature displayed in His creation, so that we both glorify Him and give Him thanks?

❖ Do we truly honor God acknowledging the fact that our lives and all our ways are in His mighty hand?

❖ Do we sincerely take note of God by loving and doing good to our fellowman?

❖ Do we acknowledge God's plan by abiding in the doctrine of Christ?

❖ And finally, do we appreciate God's uniqueness by shunning idol worship in any form?

If we would answer "no" to any of these questions, the Bible maintains that we actually do not "know" God in the sense of truly believing in Him! If this is the case, could it be that you are — at heart — an atheist? ✞

G. Devadanam is a preacher of the Gospel in India.

Friendship with God

The beauty of friendship begins with God! The awesome message of the Bible is that the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the universe wants to be our friend!

This is not just a casual observation. It is based on fact! Abraham was called the friend of God (James 2:23). Exodus 33:11 records that Moses spoke with God *"...as a man speaks to his friend."* Jesus called His disciples friends (John 15:15)

Christianity is the cumulative expression of friendship with the Lord! We learn what it means to be a friend from the kind of personal friend God is to us! His love is unfailing, His forgiveness offered even before we ask, His presence is with us when we least deserve it! Would you like to be a great friend to someone? Become a friend of God!

— Jim Caldwell

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter six, NKJV.

1. Many who had been converted on the day of Pentecost had come from distant places (2:5-11) and stayed on in Jerusalem. Those who had lands to sell sold them and shared the proceeds, so that all could have their needs met. As the church continued to grow, who began to feel neglected? (V. 1)

2. What did the apostles tell the multitude of Christians to do? (V. 2,3)

3. What were two other qualifications? (V. 3)

4. What did the apostles say they would devote themselves to do? (V. 4)

5. When the men were chosen, what did the apostles do? (V. 6)

6. After this, what three things happened? (V. 7)

7. Up to this time, who has been doing the miracles? (5:12)

8. Stephen, one of the seven on whom the apostles had laid their hands and prayed, now did what? (V. 8)

9. Who began to dispute with Stephen? (V. 9)

10. Were they able to successfully dispute what Stephen was preaching? (V. 10)

11. Not being able to dispute what he said, what did they do? (V. 11)

12. These men said, *"We have heard him speak* _____ _____ *against* _____ *and* _____*"* (V. 11)

13. Who was stirred up by these charges? (V. 12)

14. What did they do with Stephen? (V. 12)

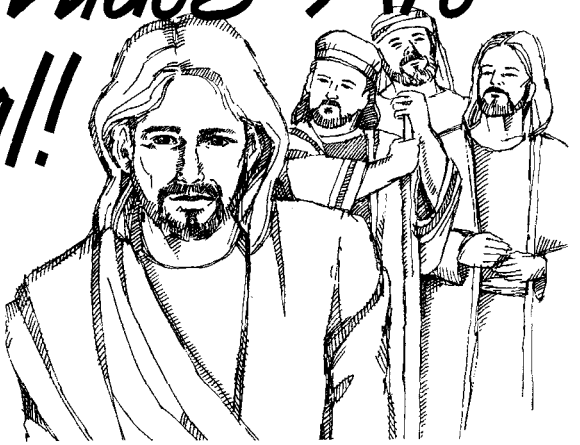
15. The false witnesses said, *"This man does not cease to speak* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____....". (V. 13)

16. What were two other accusations? (V. 14)

17. When they looked at Stephen, his face was as what? (V. 15)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

Attitudes Are Vital!



Gordon Hogan

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, *"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God,"* and, *"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."* In these statements He was saying that those who shall see God will have the beautiful attitude of being pure in heart and a proper attitude toward the Word, hungering and thirsting after it. Jesus wanted us to recognize that attitudes are vital!

In the account of the rich man and Lazarus, **four attitudes** are described. It is so very vital that the child of God have **a proper attitude toward his fellow man.** The rich man had no concern for Lazarus while they both lived on earth. Hell did not change him. He continued to be the same bigoted, selfish, self-centered person. He wanted Lazarus to serve him and soothe his pain (Luke 16:24).

The attitude of the Christian must be the attitude of Jesus, **to serve our fellow man.** *"For the Son of Man also came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (Mark 1:45).

There is no way to be right with God so long as there is bitterness and hatred for our fellow man. *"Let all bitterness, wrath and anger and clamor and railing be put away from you with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other as God also in Christ forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:31-32).

The rich man finally became

aware that his life on earth had been a bad influence, and unless his brothers were warned, they too would be in hell. He asked that Lazarus be allowed to go to his brothers and testify to them so that they would have opportunity to avoid the torment he was experiencing. It is vital that we have **the right attitude toward our family.** We must do the will of God so that the members of our immediate and extended family will be properly influenced.

We must have **the right attitude toward the Word of God.** The rich man was told that his brothers had access to the Scriptures, and if they would not believe the testimony of Moses and the prophets, they would not be convinced, even if someone were to return from the dead. The rich man, even in hell, did not believe the testimony of the Scriptures was enough (*Luke 1:29,30*). We must believe in the power of the Word (Romans 1:16).

It is vital that we have the right attitude toward **the call of God.** The rich man had opportunity to heed the call of God through Moses and the prophets, but refused it. He remains in the torments of hell for an eternity that has no end.

Jesus calls and says, *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). ✞

Gordon Hogan now teaches at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, USA, after serving many years as a missionary in Asia.

You Did It Unto Me

An agonizing cry from the valley below,
A sin-sick heart, a low bent soul,
Who will hear, and who will go
Who will venture to the valley below?

Their cries beat against the church's walls,
An eerie echo drifts down its halls;
It takes a caring heart to hear the calls
To answer the need of the wailing walls.

To your own self please be true,
Let your love do the talking for you,
And when you've finished you will know
You've helped to rescue them from below.

Remember this poem and forget it not —
Help your brother to remove each dark blot,
And in the end you will see
You did it unto them,
You did it unto Me!

— Earl W. Nester

3 Salvations

Basil Overton

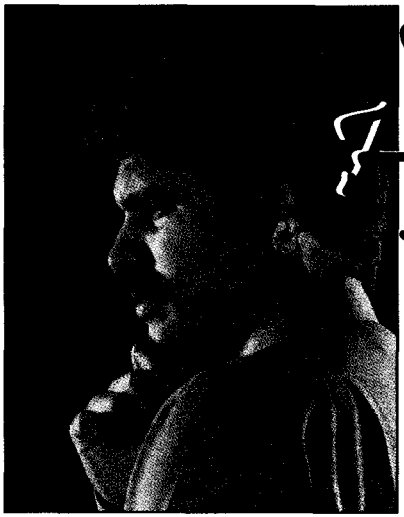
Some people think that when one is saved he is saved in such a way that he can never be lost. However, the New Testament teaches *three salvations.*

(1) One is saved from past, or alien, sins when he by faith does what God requires of him. That is the salvation Jesus was talking about when He said: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). It is the same salvation that the Holy Spirit by the mouth of the apostle referred to when he told believers to *"repent and be baptized for the remission of sins"* (Acts 2:38). It is the salvation of Acts 22:16 where Saul was told to *"arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins."* After one is thus saved from his alien sins, or after one thus becomes a Christian, he can still sin.

(2) When a child of God sins, he must ask the Father in heaven to forgive him. A child of God who sinned was told by the apostle Peter to repent and pray that he might be forgiven (Acts 8:22). Of Christians the New Testament says: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). Some preachers tell alien sinners to confess their sins and ask God to forgive them, and then quote 1 John 1:9 as a proof text for such instruction. But this passage sums up the responsibility of *erring children of God.* **Alien sinners were told by inspired preachers to believe the Gospel, repent of their sins, and be baptized for the remission of their sins.** When a child of God errs from the truth he must turn from his error back to the Lord if he expects to be saved and enter into heaven. *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins"* (James 5:19,20).

(3) Jesus said: *"He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved"* (Matthew 10:22). **Being saved in Heaven is the third kind of salvation under consideration.** *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom..."* (2 Peter 1:10,11). ✝

Basil Overton is editor of *The World Evangelist* in Florence, Alabama, USA.



There Are Hypocrites in that Church

Stan Mitchell

In twenty-three years of preaching I have heard this statement, made one way or the other: "The reason I quit the church is because there are hypocrites there!"

The fact is that there *are* hypocrites in the church. Jesus Christ found hypocrites among the religious elite of his day, too, and roundly condemned them. No doubt He would singe today's church for its hypocrisy, too. It's not right when church leaders are more concerned about their own honor than they are about honoring Christ. It's not right when the insincere actions of church members shut the lost out from access to Jesus Christ. It's not right when Christians are more concerned about the minutia of law keeping than they are about the great Issues of justice, mercy, and faithfulness. It's not right when Christians are concerned about outward appearance and not about the condition of their hearts. It's not right when Christians bemoan the sinful actions of people in days gone by, yet fail to see their own sinful ways (see Matthew 23:5-12).

So you are disturbed by hypocrisy in the church? So is the Lord Jesus.

Of course, Jesus didn't quit the church. He died for it. He still loves her, cherishes her, and leads her.

And another consideration — if you leave the church over "those" imperfect Christians, just think what you are doing: You are honoring

your own feelings, not Christ's. You are shutting your friends and family out from Christ by your example. You are concerned about law keeping (others'!) and are being neither merciful nor faithful yourself. You have judged the outside (what you can see, for there is no way that you can read church members' hearts!). You are bemoaning the sinful actions of others while failing to take into account your own. In a word, you are a... well, you know what I mean!

Yes, the church is flawed, mistake-prone, *and **blood bought!***

And before you turn away from the church, convinced that this group of people is *sinful* and *unredeemable,* remember that that is precisely what Jesus did — **He redeemed them!**

The question is not, "Are you part of a *perfect church?"* The real question is, "Are you a part of the **redeemed?"**

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy...and to present her to himself as a radiant church without spot or wrinkle..." (Ephesians 5:25-27). ✝

Stan Mitchell preaches the gospel in Borger, Texas, USA.

HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT GOD WANTS?

On one occasion of paramount importance, the voice of God Himself was heard speaking from heaven. Before the very eyes of the disciples, Jesus had been transformed so that His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light. As the disciples watched, Jesus stood talking with Moses and Elijah, men who had passed from the scenes of this world many centuries earlier.

The response of the disciples was to say, "Let's build three temples here, to honor these three who stand before us!"

But as they spoke, *"...a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, **'This is My beloved Son, In whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'"***

Jesus Himself said, *"...I can do nothing of Myself; but as **My Father taught me, I speak these things."***

If we want to know the will of God, we must listen to His Son, Jesus Christ (John 8:28)

NEXT: *Who will be saved?*

The Lord's Church



Charles E. Burch

The Lord's church is the most glorious organization upon the face of the earth. It is the only institution in the world to which God adds the saved. It was purchased with the precious blood of Christ. The apostle Paul told the elders of Ephesus to *"...Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28). This shows the importance of the church, as one considers the price paid by our Lord.

The church as God designed it is perfect. Man pollutes it when he brings into it things that our Lord did not authorize. Paul had a lot to say about the purity which Christ commands. Notice these verses: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, **that he might present it to himself a glorious church,** not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Again Paul wrote, *"And he is the head of the **body, the church:** who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence"* (Colossians 1:18). Notice what is said here: *the body and the church are the same.* The "He" in the above verse is Christ. Therefore, the church which **He** purchased is **His spiritual body.** Since the church is the "body" of Christ, we should realize how important it is to keep that body pure.

As we look at the Lord's church as revealed in the Bible, we find a number of things:

It has a perfect organization. Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22,23); elders oversee the local congregation (Acts 20:28); and deacons serve the local congregation under the oversight of the elders (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

It reveals the perfect plan of salvation. One must hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17); have faith, or believe in Christ (Hebrews 11:6); repent (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3,5); confess Christ to be God's Son (Acts 8:37); and be baptized into Christ for the remission or forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15,16).

The problem comes and the church is blemished and spotted with sin when there is deviation from what God authorized. Paul told the elders from Ephesus, *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"* (Acts 20:29,30). Paul was speaking of false teachers who would promote the doctrines of men instead of being true to the Word of God.

Jesus warned, *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves"* (Matthew 7:15).

We must be constantly on guard against error, which has a way of creeping in. We must *learn* the truth, *love* the truth, *obey* the truth, *live* the truth, and *teach* the truth, if we expect to be *saved by the truth. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). ✝

Charles E. Burch has been serving as the preacher in Mobile, Alabama, USA.

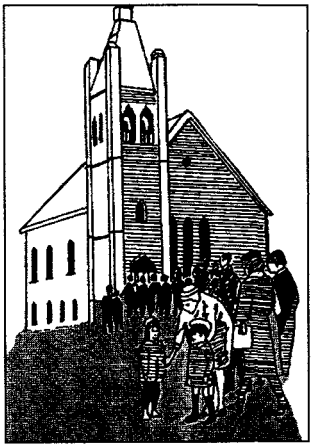
"Church" thoughts:

You quickly lose interest in the church if you have nothing invested.

A church is no more to be blamed for the bad people in it than a hospital is to be blamed for the sick people that are in it.

You will enjoy the worship service more if you do not sit in the seat of the scornful.

He who offers God a second place offers Him no place at all.

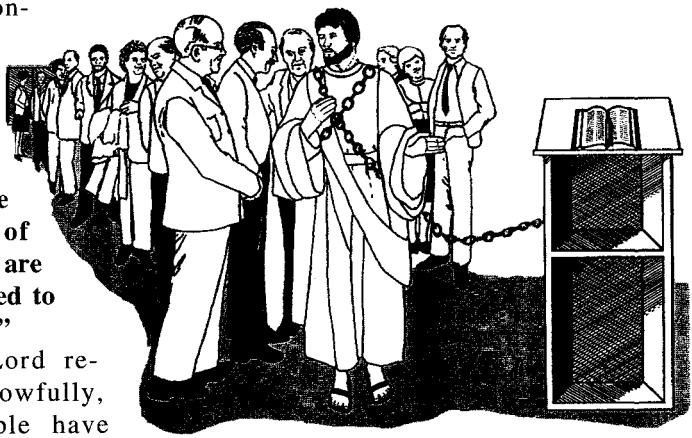


Jesus Must Be Released from the Church Building

(A preacher's story, used to illustrate how we limit God and the Gospel)

An almost endless line of people crowded before a small church building. Such an unusual sight aroused the curiosity of a passing preacher. After making several inquiries, he discovered that no one really knew why the great crowd was seeking to get into the small building.

He joined the crowd and waited in line to get inside. Eventually he made his way up the steps and down the aisle to the front of the building. The most amazing spectacle imaginable captured his attention! There, chained to the pulpit, was the Lord Jesus Christ!



In astonishment, the preacher asked, **"Lord, what is the meaning of this? Why are You chained to the pulpit?"**

The Lord replied sorrowfully, "My people have done this to Me. Instead of following My command to go tell the world the good news of salvation, they have chained Me to this pulpit and only those who are interested enough to come into the building ever hear about Me."

Our Lord's Plan for Making Disciples

Clayton Pepper

In a survey concerning evangelism, 14,000 people were asked, "What or who was responsible for your coming to Christ?" 75 to 90% said a friend or relative. Since the research indicates such a strong influence among friends and relatives, it should cause us to focus attention on how this avenue was used in the New Testament times to reach souls for Christ.

- After *Jesus* healed a man who was demon possessed, He told him, *"Go **home to thy friends and tell them** how great things the Lord hath done for thee; and hath had compassion on thee"* (Mark 5:19).
- While we are not sure that *Philip* knew Nathaniel, it would appear that this may have been the case. ***"Philip findeth Nathaniel,** and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph"* (John 1:45).
- *Cornelius* called together his friends when Peter came to his house. *"...And Cornelius waited for them and had **called together his...near friends."*** (Acts 10:24).

Webs of Common Kinship

There are numerous examples in the New Testament of people who had come to believe in Jesus and this led to their family members or their whole house responding to the gospel.

- This was true of *the nobleman* in John 4:53. *"...and himself believed, and **his whole house."***
- *Andrew* called his brother Peter. *"He first **findeth his own brother,** Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ"* (John 1:40,41).
- *Lydia* believed and this led to her household believing. *"And when she was baptized, **and her household..."*** (Acts 16:15).
- *The Philippian Jailer* and his house believed — *"And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and **to all that were in his house.** And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and*

was baptized, he and all his, straightway" (Acts 16:32,33).

- When *Matthew* followed Jesus he invited His friends to come to dinner. *"And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, **many publicans and sinners, sat also together** with Jesus and his disciples..."* (Mark 2:14,15).

The Early Church Taught in Homes

We recall that the early church did much of its teaching in homes.

- *"And daily in the temple, and **in every house,** they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"* (Acts 5:42).
- Paul said that he taught publicly and from house to house. *"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publickly, and **from house to house"*** (Acts 20:20).

We can conclude from these many biblical examples that prospects for conversion are within families, among friends, among those with whom we have common interests. As we continue to broaden our friendships we continue to open further doors of opportunity for spreading the Gospel.

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). This indicates that a large number of early Christians were sharing their faith with other people, even as they were being persecuted for that faith.

Today there are many ministers and elders who feel that the majority in the congregation cannot be involved in the work of bringing others to Christ. Realizing that this can be done through a variety of approaches, including invitations to the services, giving out tracts, as well as home Bible studies, it is a tragedy indeed when every member is not encouraged and taught how that he can influence others for Christ. If we do not do this, then we destine the church to *a clergy-laity concept.* This system does not develop love for the lost and a caring church whose focus is **outward, not inward.** Inward thinking is one of Satan's greatest tools today, for it blinds individual Christians and the church as a whole from *seeing* the lost around us.

Advantages of Relationships in Reaching Others

1. They permit a natural sharing of Christian love and spiritual truths. Many, at first, would not consent to a study of the Bible. But continued interest shown by a caring Christian often provides opportunities to influ-

ence them for Christ and ultimately may result in a home Bible study or the family attending church services with their friends.

2. Personal relationships encourage receptivity. Studies in communication have shown that the *most effective* way to communicate a message is on a face-to-face basis. The *second* most effective way is with a small group in someone's home. The thing that increases the effectiveness is when the hearer **knows the speaker and has confidence in him,** because people are more likely to listen to a trusted friend than to a total stranger.

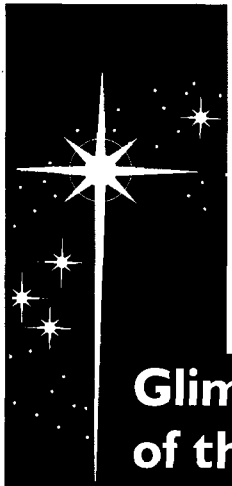
3. The building of relationships helps to keep those who have been converted. One reason it is difficult to keep new converts is because of their not having many friends in the local church, or perhaps they did not attend the services before being baptized. If friends and relatives can be persuaded to attend Bible school and worship, so that good relationships can be established, we are much more likely to keep them faithful after they have become Christians.

4. Entire families are often reached. When the entire family can be reached they all begin their new life together and grow together as a family unit, and each is strengthened. I had a part in seeing seven members of one family baptized. At another time I knew of eight baptisms and restorations within one family, including relatives. What if several in a family are not reached? Conflict and discouragement may keep the new Christian from remaining faithful.

5. When one becomes a Christian he has immediately a natural network for sharing the good news he has learned. Often one is very eager to share with his entire family the news that he has learned and is eager to see them learn and obey the gospel. A Jewish man who had obeyed the gospel told me that he sought every opportunity he could to tell his family of his faith in Jesus.

The church growth center indicates that a new Christian would have 8-12 possible prospects among his family and friends. Not speaking to them of Christ and His church is the way we keep our Lord chained to the pulpits in our land. God help us to realize the riches we have found in becoming Christians ourselves, and help us to have the commitment and vision to share the truth with those we love most in this world. ✝

Clayton Pepper, long-time promoter of church growth, works with Restoration Network International in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.



Glimpses of the History of the Lord's Church in England, 1500s-1700s

Keith Sisman

During the 1500s and 1600s the Lord's church in England was far larger than most will realise. Conservative estimates put it around fifty-plus congregations at the turn of the century. The church was largely made up of people from a working background and was not represented in parliament.

As the Puritans increased in power during the 1640s the country was torn apart by civil wars from 1642 to 1648. Arguments existed between King and Parliament and in the church against the Anglicans and Puritans. Since the Church of England is a state church these arguments were political as well as religious. As a result of the struggle for power, the Archbishop of Canterbury, high church Anglican, William Laud, was executed on Tower Hill, London on 10 January 1645. In January 1649 King Charles 1 was tried for his life and executed. Never before had an English king been executed by law. Certainly kings had been brutally murdered but never killed legally.

Now the Puritans under Oliver Cromwell had power in the country, in the Church, in Parliament and in the Army. Cromwell was appointed Lord Protector of England and the Commonwealth on December 16, 1653. He died on 3 September 1658 and was replaced by his son Richard, but this lasted only a short time.

The monarchy was reinstated, and during 1662 the act of Uniformity was re-established. Under this act those who preached against the now successful Anglican party in the church were removed from office. Many were imprisoned, and many died. This act, with small alterations, is still in force. A preacher in the Church of England today may be able to preach legally in

favor of accepting homosexuals in the Church, but the same preacher cannot preach against infant baptism though the Church of England will baptise by immersion a person who has never been baptised.

The true church suffered greatly at this time. John Milton (Poet and writer of Paradise Lost), previously a Presbyterian, became a member of the Lord's church and suffered greatly for his belief.

In 1643 Benjamin Cox, the son of a bishop in the Church of England, and a minister of a church of Christ at Bedford, was sent to jail for preaching against infant baptism at Coventry after a debate with the Presbyterians. Who won the debate we do not know, but the Presbyterians — having initially encouraged the debate — called for the police and had Cox arrested, which finished the debate! He was ordered to leave Coventry. He refused to go and was promptly sent to jail, but he was released shortly afterwards. In 1657 the church at Bedford appointed John Bunyan as preacher, who frequently clashed with Henry Dunne. Bunyan suffered twelve years in prison (1660-72) before becoming the first licensed preacher outside the Anglican church in England. He died in 1688. Bunyan was the leading liberal in the Lord's church of that day, his teaching of salvation through grace/faith without works survives to this day in the Baptist denomination.

Cromwell was well acquainted with the Lord's church. For awhile in London he had met with a church of Christ, the same congregation that many of the Pilgrim fathers also worshipped with before starting their perilous voyage to the Americas.

Many in the army were members of the Lord's church, and the head of the army was Cromwell. For the first time in English history the Lord's church could worship without fear, as well as being in position to influence the politicians of the time. Cromwell's son-in-law, the Lord Deputy Fleetwood, was married to Bridgett, this being her second husband, the first having died. They were both members of the church of Christ and well known for it. Major-General Harrison, Major-General Ludlow and Colonel Hutchinson were other well-known members of the Lord's church. As such, they were able to influence parliament against imposing a compulsory religion.

Cromwell, himself, was a member of an independent church. Whether that was a church of Christ or part of the greater congregational movement is difficult to establish. The congregational churches at this time were known as independent, separatist or even dissenting churches. The churches of Christ were labelled as being part of this movement. These churches later

became known as the United Reformed Church.

After 1660, repression again was forced on all churches who opposed the State Church of England, now strongly Anglican. This continued until the Act of Toleration was passed in 1689. This Act allowed not only congregational churches to exist, but it also allowed preachers in them to preach against infant baptism.

In the 1700s there were four distinct groups of dissenters from the Church of England who were baptizing believers by immersion: the continental Anabaptists who were just a small remnant; the church of Christ, which existed in many places in Europe, England and the Americas; the Calvinistic Baptist denomination, particularly in America; and the General Baptist denomination in England. The English church of Christ would, until the 1790s, associate with these various emerging 'baptist' groups. After 1790, as the various doctrines became more polarized and divergent, they would separate and, later, in the eighteen hundreds, fellowship with the American restoration movement. ✝

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Keith Sisman preaches for the Cambridge Church of Christ in England. Having been given permission to use the ancient Cambridge Library and the British Library, he is doing extensive research and writing on the records he is finding concerning the church in Europe, particularly in England.

Indifference — The Thief in the Church



Someone has said, "The greatest challenge to faith is not intellectual at all, but rather shallow indifference." As I see it, the greatest threat from within the church is not false doctrine, vile sins, or even the loss of faith, but rather simple indifference.

Indifference is "the thief in the church." It robs the church of our time, our talents, and our support. Indifference kidnaps Christians out of Sunday School and worship, saps the enthusiasm of members, sabotages all kinds of good programs, and takes the pleasure out of serving Jesus.

Indifference is the most difficult of all problems in the church to deal with. Many in the church are not against what we are trying to do, nor are they really for it. They're just indifferent!

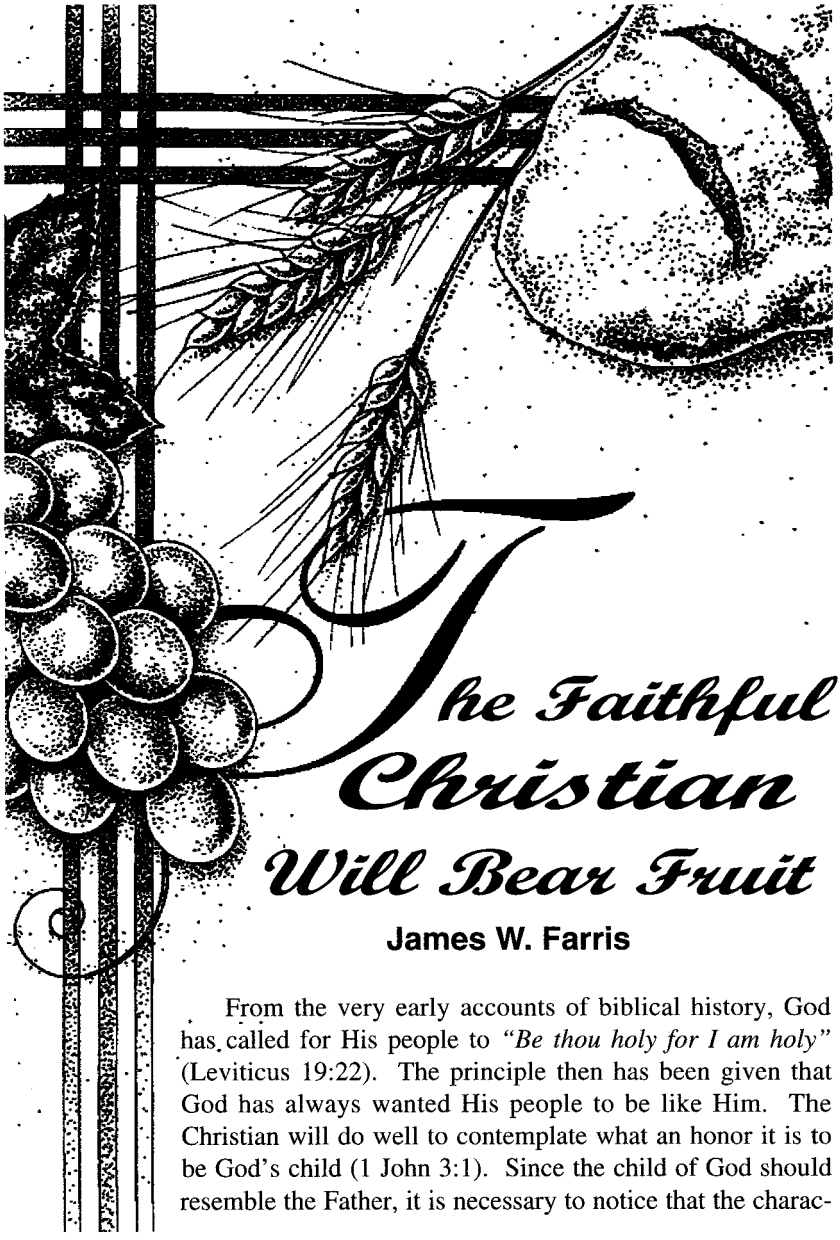
"Trust a person little who praises everyone; trust a person less who criticizes everyone; trust a person least who is indifferent."

People can change their minds. A man's right to hold a certain view does not mean that view is right. One can be led to a fuller knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. Christians can be "equipped" for fuller service and guided in fruitful ministries for the Lord. We can grow and mature as we correct our mistakes and become more like Jesus.

But not if we are indifferent. ✝

Author Unknown

Do we wonder that ***"These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth'"*** (Revelation 3:15,16)?



The Faithful Christian Will Bear Fruit

James W. Farris

From the very early accounts of biblical history, God has called for His people to *"Be thou holy for I am holy"* (Leviticus 19:22). The principle then has been given that God has always wanted His people to be like Him. The Christian will do well to contemplate what an honor it is to be God's child (1 John 3:1). Since the child of God should resemble the Father, it is necessary to notice that the charac-

teristic of faithfulness is ascribed to God in both the Old and New Testaments. Moses said that *"He is God, the faithful, who keeps covenants and mercy for one thousand generations..."* (Deuteronomy 7:9). Paul told Timothy that God *"cannot deny Himself"* (2 Timothy 2:13) Our God then is one who keeps promises and is faithful to us. Obviously then we should be what He wants us to be concerning our own spiritual faithfulness.

In the context of the work of the church, each Christian has to answer a very personal question: "Am I as faithful as God would desire me to be?" In considering our own biblical faithfulness, there are varied degrees of faith the Bible discusses.

1. There is a vain faith. Vain is defined as empty or worthless. Paul discusses that faith can be made void or vain when one fails to hold fast to the memory and truth of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:2).

2. There is a dead faith. James discusses those who claim to be faithful individuals but who will not present their faith in the actions of helping another. *"Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone"* (James 2:17).

3. There is a little faith. In Matthew 14:31 Jesus remarked to the doubting apostles just following a terrible storm at sea, *"Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"*

4. There is a great faith. Paul told the Thessalonian brethren that he always remembered their *"work of faith and labor of love"* (1 Thessalonians 1:3)

Biblically, the mention of vain, dead or little faith is spoken of negatively in the New Testament. Such a faith does not allow ones fullest potential in Christ to be obtained. The only reasonable alternative is that God's children should have great faith like the Thessalonians. We should desire this goal. In this great faith we will see our influence spreading quickly throughout the world. The world will be unable to deny the faith of God's people who share this common bond. Paul spoke of the Romans as having a faith that was known through the entire world (Romans 1:8).

If the church is to thrive then all members must understand that there is a great work for the church to do. We all have this in common: God is to be glorified and there are souls to rescue and save. It is not reasonable to conclude that a body of such far-reaching magnitude can survive as it must without making some efforts to grow into this millennium. Let us faithfully bear precious fruit for Jesus today. ✞

James Farris preaches for the Lord's church in San Augustine, Texas. USA.





The Engineers and the Blacksmith

Bobby Dockery

During the Civil War, General Stonewall Jackson found it necessary to move his army across a river one night. He called in his engineers and ordered them to construct a bridge for his artillery and wagons to cross over. He also called in his wagon-master, a blacksmith by trade, and ordered him to get the wagon train ready to cross the river as soon as the bridge was done. The engineers went to work in their usual expert manner to design a bridge. The blacksmith, knowing only that something had to be done in the most practical way, gathered a force and improvised a bridge out of logs, fence rails, and rocks. Before dawn he awakened General Jackson to report that the wagons and artillery were all safely across. The astonished General asked, "Where are the engineers?" The blacksmith replied. "They're still over there in their tent drawing plans."

Perhaps there is an important reminder here for all of us. When it comes to serving God, there is an ever-present danger that we will be content merely to draw designs instead of getting over the river! This can be true in a number of ways.

Evangelism. Seldom, if ever, in history have Christians spent more

time discussing ways of doing evangelism. Workshops and seminars are conducted all across the country to motivate and train soul winners. Books are written on evangelism; discussion is given to techniques of evangelism and the theory of evangelism. We analyze, theorize, verbalize...but we don't evangelize! Somehow, we haven't gotten across the street or across the ocean with the Gospel (Matthew 28:19,20).

Morality. Many have reduced the Christian life to a theoretical exercise. They are good at drawing models of the holy life but woefully inadequate when it comes to living it. They are hearers of the Word, but not doers (James 1:22)! They have intellectualized, but not actualized, the teaching of Jesus!

Family Life. Great concern is expressed today about the condition of the family. "Marriage Enrichment" seminars have become a part of the strategy for communicating principles which are basic to the building of happy homes. But here again, there is a very real danger that we will content ourselves with identifying principles without applying them to the day-to-day situations of family life.

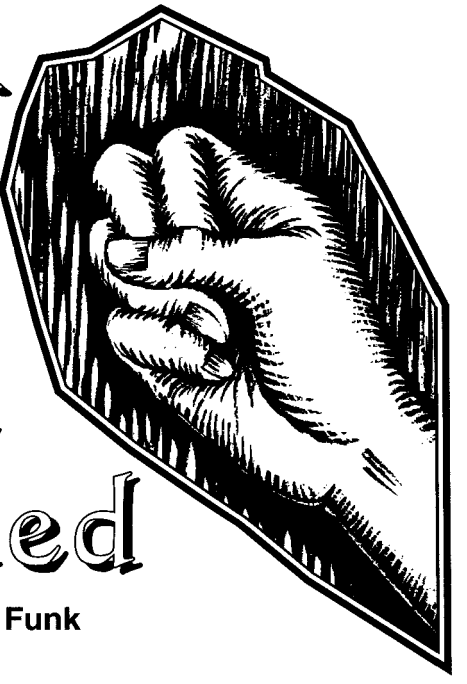
Spirituality. In recent years the religious book market has been flooded with "how to" books purporting to transform weak, inadequate Christians into spiritual giants in a few easy lessons. "Buy this book...follow this guide...and spiritual greatness is yours!" But the Bible teaches that Christian greatness comes through service (Matthew 20:26,27). Real Christianity is not a matter of books read, but service rendered! It is not ivory-tower contemplation which produces victorious Christianity, but service in the highways and byways of life!

It goes without saying that proper preparation is necessary in life. Planning and groundwork are essential for success. But the time comes when theory must be translated into practice. In Christianity, as in life, the goal is not the creation of beautiful blueprints, but of bridges!

Bobby Dockery works with the Baldwin Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

***"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Matthew 20:26-28).**

Knock and the Door Will Be Opened



George Funk

You know, every time Jesus tells a story about knocking, He is talking about persistence. He is talking about sticking with it, hanging in there, keeping after it, not giving up.

At 5 o'clock this morning, when my alarm went off for me to get up and go out for my morning jog, I did not want to put my feet on the floor any more than I wanted to a year ago. But when that alarm went off, I said to myself, "If I want to run the Comrades Marathon in June this year, I must get after it. Hang in there!". I have run it 11 times now. It is not easy being persistent. There are all kinds of excuses. Ask me! I got up many times, put my running gear on, looked out the window and got back into bed — giving in to self, not hanging in there or being persistent.

I know exercise is good for the body and mind, so I try harder the next day, making it a habit, being persistent, getting up and training, one day at a time, one day at a time.

That is precisely the way our spiritual walk/run needs to be.

God encourages us to live one day at a time. I don't know about

you, but I don't do a good job at that. I sometimes tend to want to worry about tomorrow's difficulties. Yet, God says, you *can do it* — just hang in there, be persistent and do it **today!**

In Matthew 7:7 Jesus promises: *"Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and everyone who seeks, finds and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

What is Jesus saying to us? He is saying: **Ask. Seek. Knock.** Get after it — I am with you. Be persistent!

I pray that we in Africa will be go-getters and know God is with us. We can do all things through Christ who gives us the strength (Philippians 4:13). ✝

George Funk is an evangelist in the Lord's church in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Wasted years

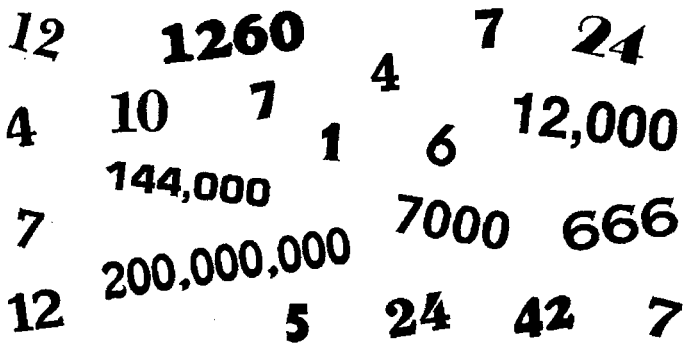
I looked upon a farm one day, that once I used to own,
The barn had fallen to the ground, the fields were overgrown.
The house in which my children grew, where we had lived for years,
I turned to see it broken down, and brushed aside the tears.

I looked upon my soul one day, to find it, too, had grown
With thorns and thistles everywhere, the seeds neglect had sown.
The years had passed while I had cared for things of lesser worth,
Heaven's treasures I'd let go, while minding things of earth.

To Christ I turned with bitter tears and cried, "O Lord, forgive!
"So little time is left for Thee, not many years to live."
The wasted years forever gone, the days I can't recall;
If I could live those days again, I'd make Him Lord of all.

— Author Unknown

PUZZLE PAGE

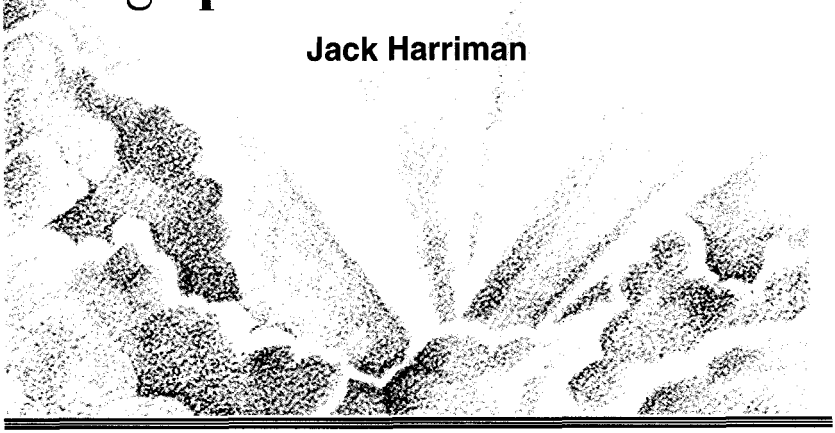


Write the correct numbers in the blanks below. Cross out each number above as you use it, and do not use it more than once.

Number of	Revelation
_____ letters to churches written in the book of Revelation	1:4
_____ golden lampstands	1:12
_____ thrones around central throne	4:4
_____ elders	4:4
_____ living creatures	4:6
_____ wings on each creature	4:8
_____ seals on scroll	5:1
_____ angels at the corners of the earth	7:1
_____ people redeemed from each tribe of Israel	7:4
_____ months of torture after 5th trumpet	9:5
_____ troops of cavalry after 6th trumpet	9:16
_____ months when temple court will be trampled	11:2
_____ days 2 people will prophesy	11:3
_____ people killed at an earthquake	11:13
_____ stars on the crown	12:1
_____ horns on the beast from the sea	13:1
_____ mark of the beast	13:18
_____ redeemed people who could learn a new song	14:3
_____ angels with the last plagues	15:1
_____ gates in the new Jerusalem	21:12
_____ pearls in each gate at new Jerusalem	21:21

Being Optimistic About the Future

Jack Harriman



As one grows older, a major struggle of life is one's outlook — optimistic or pessimistic. We all want to have a positive outlook on the future, but that is difficult for many. It gets a lot easier when we keep God in the picture.

Solomon viewed life without God and concluded, *"Vanity of vanity. All is vanity."* Then he viewed it with God and saw a much brighter future. Life without God would have been dark indeed for the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos. This may be why John was allowed to look into heaven and see God on His throne and all the other details of that heavenly scene (Revelation 4-5). Now God is in the picture. The future looks much brighter.

If we look at our world from a human point of view, one can see a lot of gloom and doom. And such is the only view that most of the world has. They need God in their world-view, and He must be kept in ours, as well.

God rules the world. We do not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. And so all things are possible, and we can look for good things to occur. God is at work on the side of good in my life and yours (Romans 8:28).

This I believe: The best is yet to be, and God's obedient children are on their way to heaven. These two things make for a bright and glorious future. ✞

Jack Harriman is the preacher for the Center Street Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

Johnny Pepper

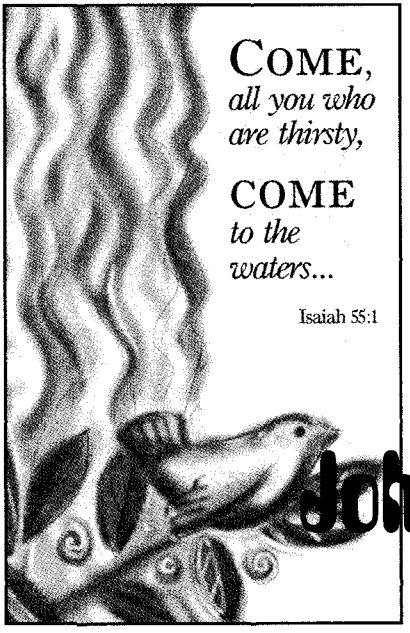
Jim Bill McInteer

"Johnny Pepper!"

That name itself is fascinating, isn't it? But Johnny Pepper has more of a claim for fame than just the existence of a good Irish-American name.

As we assembled under a tent in Athens, Alabama, Clinton Brackeen, the song leader, said at an appropriate spot in the service, "Now Brother Johnny Pepper will lead us in prayer."

We bowed together and one of the petitions that came from the lips of Johnny Pepper was this: "Help Brother McInteer to preach like he ought to preach, and help us who sit here to hear like we ought to hear." This is a sobering responsibility, is it not?



Johnny Pepper was totally unknown to the visiting evangelist. At the end of the service Doyle Banta said, "This is Johnny Pepper."

After a cordial exchange of customary greetings the local evangelist said, "And this is the eighty-seventh different gospel meeting he has attended this year!" Eighty-seven preachers had enjoyed his support. Eighty-seven churches had been encouraged by his presence. Eighty-seven different congregations within a radius of fifty miles had shared in his expressions of gratitude for the work that they were attempting to do.

And that wasn't all. In forty-eight years of service since he has become a Christian, only five times has he missed the public assembly on the Lord's day. Those five absences were caused by his illness. Otherwise, he has always been there.

That gave rise to these questions as suggested by Doyle Banta: "Doesn't it rain at Johnny Pepper's house? Doesn't it get cold out

Johnny Pepper's way? Doesn't the road get bad that leads by Johnny Pepper's house? Doesn't it get hot where Johnny Pepper lives? Aren't there duties he needs to attend to? Sometimes doesn't he need to be at other places? Doesn't Johnny Pepper get tired? Does Johnny Pepper have relatives? What about those eleven children he has — aren't they trouble to get ready to bring to Bible school?" (Incidentally, every one of his eleven children is a faithful Christian.)

Every excuse that you hear offered by every one of the brethren who has been an absentee brother could also come to Johnny Pepper. Yet eighty-seven gospel meetings in one year have been graced by his attendance, and for forty-eight years he has attended the worship faithfully. Quite a man — this Johnny Pepper! ✞

Jim Bill McInteer is a retired gospel preacher living in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

But NOT on Sunday Night!!!

I love the church that Jesus bought,
and know that it is right.
I go to worship Sunday morn,
but not on Sunday night.
I love to sing the songs of God –
such worship must be right;
This I do on Sunday morn,
but not on Sunday night.
God bless our elders, preacher, too,
and give them power and might.
But put the sinner in my place,
At worship Sunday night.
I love to hear the gospel taught. –
It gives me pure delight.
I hear it Sunday morning,
but not on Sunday night.
I'd go through rain and sleet, and snow –
Do anything that's right –
To be at worship Sunday morn,
but not on Sunday night.
I know I need more strength from God
to keep me in the light.
For help I go on Sunday morn,
but not on Sunday night.
Yes, all of us must die one day
– I hope that I'll be right –
And that I'll die on Sunday morn,
and NOT on Sunday night.

– Anonymous

THE CHRISTIAN'S FIRST LOVE

Don L. Norwood

When people first become Christians, they usually are very excited about being saved. They want to go out and teach the whole world. They are burning with zeal. They love the Lord and want to share Him with everyone. This, of course, is how the Lord wishes for His people to be always (1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

A true disciple has given himself to the Lord, to be taught and used in His service (Luke 14:33; Galatians 2:20; Romans 12:1,2). Such a one will never grow weary in well doing (Galatians 6:9). He will remain fervent in spirit in serving Christ (Romans 12:11).

In the first century A.D. the Christians at Ephesus somehow had lost their first love (putting Christ first in all their considerations and setting their chief concerns on Him and on spiritual things). They taught the truth (Revelation 2:2) and would not tolerate false teachers. They patiently persevered and did not grow weary (Revelation 2:3). They labored in His cause, yet they had lost their first love.

We see that people can teach the truth and perform the acts of worship outwardly in a correct way, but still not do these things with the proper attitude of heart.

Every act of obedient service to the Lord must be done out of genuine love for Him (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) or it is useless. If we teach or do anything in service to Him only as a sense of duty and not because we truly love Him, it will not be acceptable to Him. This is truly an important lesson for Christians to learn.

Another lesson we must learn is that we must serve the Lord by *"abiding"* in His teaching: *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed"* (John 8:31). *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son"* (2 John 9,10). ✝

Don Norwood, whose home is in Mason, Texas, USA, serves as a missionary to India.

SEEKING PEACE

E. Claude Gardner

Unity in the church, the home, and the community are both *"good and pleasant."* King David said, *"Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity"* (Psalm 133:1). We are to be seekers of peace, and not promoters of ill will. We should strive to be *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Love for God and for one another will lead us to seek the best interest of the brethren. Peter said, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren,* ***see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently"*** (1 Peter 1:22).

As children of God, we must hear and obey our Father. We must accept whatever He has taught in His Word. The same truth applies to all persons alike, to those within His spiritual family as well as to those outside. The Bible is the authority which is binding in heaven and on the earth, and it is by that word that all will one day be judged (2 Timothy 3:16,17; Matthew 16:19; John 12:48).

We know that from time to time problems will arise to give us concern. Out of love for the truth and souls of people, we will seek to deal with them fairly and sincerely. We want to do what is right.

As we deal with the problem we ask, "What are the *facts* in the case, and not *hear-say?*" If two parties are involved, have we learned the facts first-hand from them? Do both give reliable reports?

By inspiration, James gave good instructions concerning conflicts: *"Do not speak evil of one another, brethren"* (James 4:11).

In earlier verses he had described the working of heavenly wisdom: *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace"* (James 3:17,18).

When biblical wisdom and principles are applied to the situations under question, peace and harmony should be the result. ✝

E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

If It's Not A Challenge...

Dan Wheeler

Marty Revellette was already considered a hero for rescuing a woman in a burning vehicle — an extraordinary feat, considering Marty has no arms. A follow-up on Marty shows him as a daily hero, mentoring a young armless boy named William and showing him that there is very little that he can't do or learn to do. In fact, Marty takes William fishing and shows him how to bait the hook, cast the reel, and catch the fish, using his feet, teeth, shoulder, or whatever. How does Marty feel about taking on seemingly impossible tasks? "If it's not a challenge, you don't learn anything," he says.

Now think about your unfulfilled dreams. What is keeping you from doing them? If the only thing holding you back is fear of failure, you should consider that Marty didn't learn to be independent by being afraid to try. He grew up in a children's home with no mentor. He simply **had** to try if he was to accomplish anything. Part of the process was failure, and he certainly has had his share.

While modern day examples are inspirational, God's word is full of examples to encourage us in our service to Him: Abel, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and others.

Also encouraging are the many promises of God. There are thousands of promises within the biblical text, some of which fall into the realm of what the apostle calls *"exceeding great and precious promises"* (2 Peter 1:4). One of them is that He is able to *"do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think..."* (Ephesians 3:20).

Along with the promises are many expectations that God has for us. A good summary of the Christian life is Ephesians 2:10, which says, *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

In view of all of the promises, examples, and expectations in the Bible, let's determine to meet challenges and do courageous things for God's glory. ✝

Dan Wheeler preaches for the South Seminole Church of Christ in Winter Park, Florida, USA.

Realizing the Value of Life

Mike King



Have you ever had the feeling that we assume too much? I went to bed last evening *expecting* to arise this morning. God was good, so I did. It could just as easily have been that, during the night, my time on earth was exhausted and that I awakened in that other world where there is no more death.

As I drove to work this morning, everyone was hurrying off to their places of employment, school, breakfast, etc. They appeared to be so preoccupied with meeting a deadline that the real value of life seemed to be the last thing on their mind. (I could tell in part by the way they were driving!)

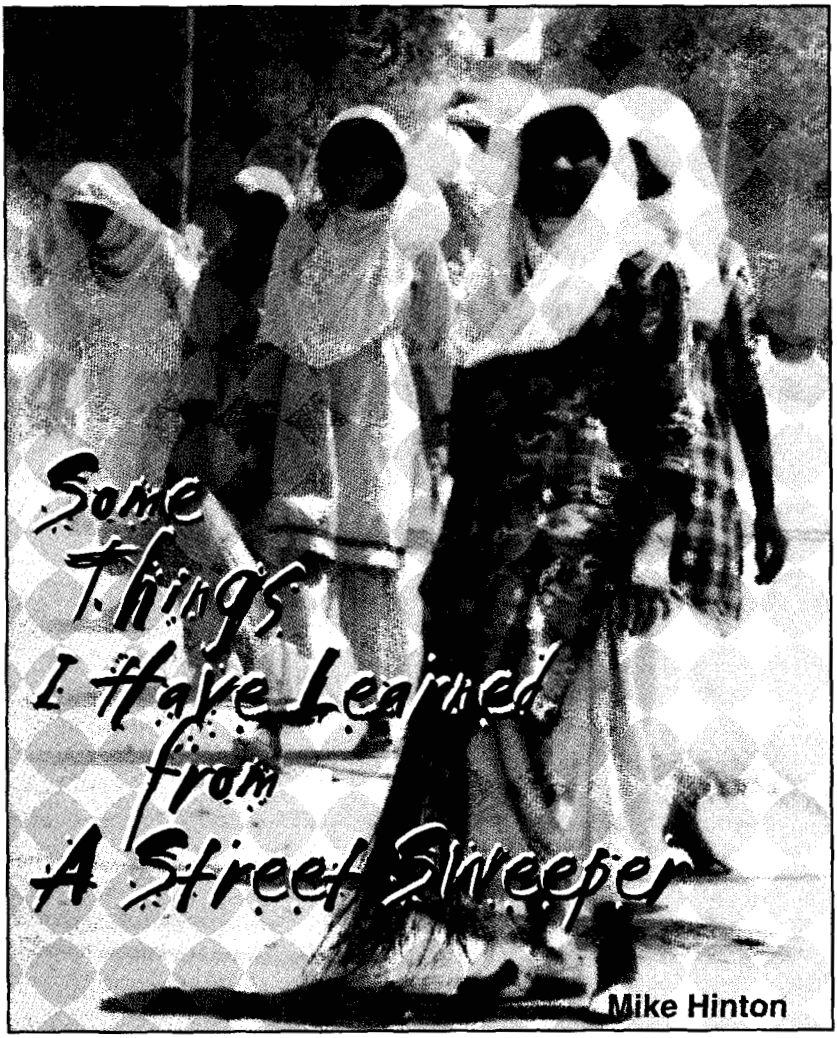
A year ago this afternoon I stood by my mother's bed and literally watched her life leave her mortal body. Since then, I have had a greater appreciation for each day. The human body fights to live because it is so instinctive for us to want to live and drink up all the joys life has to offer. This must account for the sadness incurred when life is terminated and we are forced to "let go".

Death is our greatest reminder to live, love and enjoy each day. Not knowing how many there may be, we should make the best of every moment of life's precious commodities. God's man, David, said, *"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"* (Psalm 118:24). What epitaph or statement could best describe our disposition toward life? Would it be grouchy, critical, unhappy, purposeless, selfish, etc.?

Life is good and the joys and opportunities it offers are manifold. Why not convert some of this time into personal development, service to God and benefit to our fellowman?

Life seems to have a greater redeemable value when we give it away! ✞

Mike King preaches for the Grant Street Church of Christ in Decatur, Alabama, USA.



"It's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it," is an oft-used phrase that has taken on new meaning for me of late. We usually reserve these words for tasks that are not as physically dire as they are disturbing and unpleasant. In this particular story however it is indeed "dirt" with which we are concerned. On my most recent trip to India I had an

opportunity to observe a street sweeper at work. NO, not the nocturnal mechanical beasts that rumble past your house at midnight vacuuming up the waste of an affluent society. This street sweeper was a stoop-shouldered woman probably in her forties, equipped with a handmade broom and a two-wheeled cart.

I was on the roof of an apartment building in Hyderabad, watching the city come to life in the early dawn, when I first saw her making her way down below. The broom was very short and required that she bend over to sweep, explaining the back that seemed permanently bent. She worked with a steady pace, first sweeping the debris into a pile and then, using a piece of a cardboard box as a dustpan, she would load the trash in her cart. It struck me what a discouraging job this must be. At best it would only be two or three days before one could scarcely tell that the street had ever been swept, owing to the steady stream of traffic and livestock. Yet if she was aware of the futility of her task, it didn't reveal itself in her work.

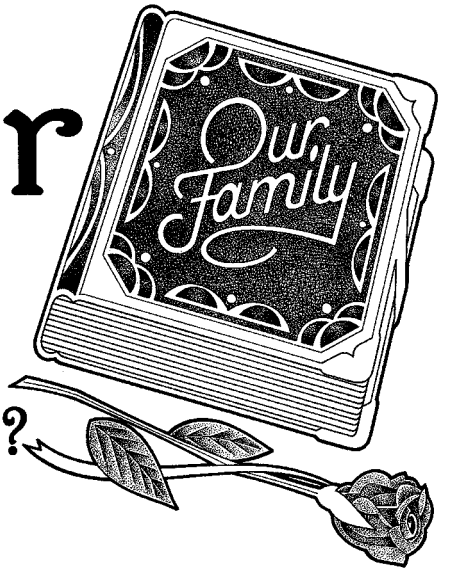
I observed her work unseen from above, I stumbled upon a metaphor for the Christian. You see, although her task was hopeless in some ways, *for the moment* she had made a difference. Ahead was a dirty street, full of trash and all manner of debris, but behind was one neat and clean, if only for a short time.

Our task as we inhibit this world at times is equally futile. We try as we go to clean up the messes that man has made of God's world, but no matter how hard we try, it seems that after a very short time the world once again dirties our freshly swept path. Jesus certainly knows how this feels. He gave His life that man might be cleansed of all sin, only to have so many return to the wallow of sin after being washed (2 Peter 2:22). Paul, too, knew this same frustration (Galatians 1:6; 3:1) of having those over whom he had labored clutter their lives again with false doctrine.

But also like Paul, we must press on toward the goal (Philippians 3:12-15), unmindful of the truth that much of our work will be burned up (1 Corinthians 3:15). We must learn to concentrate on the job at hand and take comfort from the fact that like a light shining in a dark place, it is evident that we are servants of the Most High God because we are different from the world around us. Where we have passed, our path is paved in deeds done in the Master's name, and the world is a better place if only because we tried. ✝

Mike Hinton is a Christian writer living in Hobart, Oklahoma, USA.

What Will Your Children Remember About Home?



W. Douglass Harris

All Christian parents should be concerned about the memories their children will have of home. It was *the memory of his father's home* that motivated the prodigal son to resolve to return to his father (Luke 15:16-20). The rich man's memory of wasted opportunities will torment him for all eternity (Luke 16:25). Memory is a powerful faculty for good or bad. Those impressions made on our minds early in life will be powerful in shaping the lives of our children.

> "Memory tempers prosperity, mitigates adversity, controls youth, and delights old age" (Lactantius).

What will *your* children remember about home?

❀ **Will they remember that you had great faith in God and the Bible?**

Children catch faith in God from their parents at first. Then later in their development, faith is confirmed and strengthened as they examine and accept the evidence of God upon which it is based (Romans 10:17). If the parents do not trust God and demonstrate in their lives that they do, neither will the children (Proverbs 22:6). Solomon catalogs in Proverbs 31:1-9 the things his mother taught him. Will our children remember that we walked with the giants of faith who are chronicled in Hebrews 11?

❀ **Will they remember that we were faithful in attendance at all**

the services of the church?

Nothing will make a greater impact on your children than this. If a parent absents himself from the services without a valid reason, the children will know it. If we allow the children to stay home from worship to do their school lessons, they will know what the parents consider more important. If the parents are "Sunday morning" Christians (?), the children will be like them, but weaker and more likely to fall completely away from God. The example that is set before them is the most powerful teacher of all, stronger than any words of direction that may have been said. In their adult life, what kind of memories do we want our children to have of us as parents, relative to our concern about having them in the Bible classes and other services?

❀ **Will they remember that we were spiritually-minded parents?**

Spirituality is something that is communicated to others by the order of our priorities. Do our children observe in us spirituality in every decision and action as parents, even in the simple practice of expressing thanks before meals, or reading our Bibles and praying daily, or choosing spiritual things in preference to the secular and the material? Do they see that we are more concerned about their spiritual training than their secular education (Ephesians 6:4)? What will our children remember about our priorities in life (Matthew 6:33)?

Conclusion: As our children remember us in future years, will they rise up and call us blessed, as the Scriptures say (Proverbs 31:28)? How foolish it is to wait until it is too late to do anything about this! Soon they will be gone from home and have only memories we gave them. Will they be memories for which they will be thankful, giving them comfort and direction all of their lives?

What I have written here
May not be remembered long,
But will your children's memories
Be a dirge or a song?

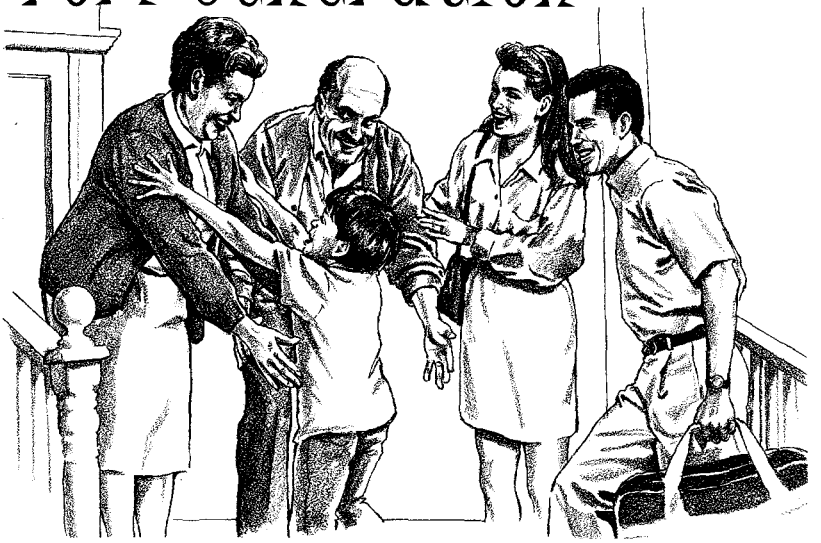
— Anonymous ✝

W. Douglass Harris is the editor of the *Caribbean Messenger* and lives in Decatur, Alabama, USA.

There is no real excellence in all this world that can be separated from right living.

— Selected

From Generation



to Generation

"Has anything like this happened in your days or in your father's days? Tell your sons about it, and let your sons tell their sons, and their sons the next generation" (Joel 1:2,3).

Jeril (Polly) Cline

My grandmother was born in 1900. Mama was my hero. She grew up in Sequatchie Valley, Tennessee. Her daddy was a preacher/farmer/teacher. Before school and after harvest their family of 14 (Mama was the second oldest and first daughter) would travel in a covered wagon up and down the mountains while her daddy preached the Gospel. Mama's adventure stories would fill my summer afternoons as she would lie between my little sister and me and weave her tales till we fell asleep.

Why am I telling you? Because her stories were woven with the thread of faith...her faith and her parents' faith and her grandparents'. As far back as I can remember I

learned about how they came to know God and His truth. I heard about the old Presbyterian minister who learned about being "just a Christian," and how he came and told her daddy, who was a great educator in those parts. When he became convinced by the Word of God that what he believed was not true, he immediately repented and was baptized in the creek that still runs not far from their old home place.

Though less than five feet tall, Mama was a formidable educator herself. After going to college "up on the mountain," she returned to teach "the little ones" in a one-room schoolhouse. The bigger children helped the smaller ones, from reading to arithmetic. And it wasn't just the 3 R's she taught them. Upon receiving the toothbrushes Mama ordered, the children delighted to take their turn at the well. They were also asked to bring their own drinking cups, which cut down on colds, etc. Every Friday evening, after chores were completed, parents and children would come for a spelling bee. This was her way of helping the older folk to read. And it worked! Though electricity would be a long time coming to that remote valley, never had the light so shined as it did in and through Miss Elvira.

Then she met a handsome, over-six-feet-tall young man from the "head of the valley." Papa swept her off her diminutive feet by his superb horsemanship. They were married in a beautiful horse-drawn buggy. His daddy had also been taught to "come out of denominationalism." He had taught many others the truth as he preached and farmed. One day after a sermon about the vices of smoking and drinking, his daddy was shot while out in the field. Papa had to quit school at the third grade to help the family make a living. (Later Mama taught this proud man to read, write, and do his sums.) Among my treasured possessions are the books they used.

Every summer I spent a month or more with these great faithful servants of the Lord. They took me with them to feed the poor, visit the sick, comfort the sorrowful, all the while sharing with me "what great things God had done for them." Seeing them through the death of children, the loss of jobs, the sickness of parents, the joy of births...God's faithfulness was the common thread. They made every "singing" a thrill, every "meeting" a blessing and introduced me to Christian camping as they loaded their truck bed full of sleeping bags and giggling children while winding their way up the mountain toward Fall Creek Falls Bible Camp. It was

there, 40 years ago, I became a Christian as I was baptized in an icy cold stream.

From the Word of God, Psalm 78:2-8, *"I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.*

"For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children that they should put their confidence in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart, and whose spirit was not faithful to God."

What are you passing on to your children and grandchildren? Is it worthy of them? Is it worth the effort? Will it last from generation to generation? Your personal faith, your experience with God as your Father, is of far more importance than any monetary inheritance you might be able to give your children. It is more important and far-reaching than you can possibly imagine. Who knows what influence your very own child or grandchild might have on this world?

It is almost 100 years since my grandmother was born in that valley. Yet even now there are churches and Christians up and down those mountains, their faithfulness, at least in part, because of her influence for God.

There is a Christian camp. There is a board member of one of our Christian colleges who is her son. And her daughter, my mother, raised five children in an atmosphere of deep, abiding faith. Now our son, her great-grandson is preaching in Atlanta.

To the glory of God, Mama's faith has entered the 21st century. How far into the future will your faith magnify the Father?

"His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him" (Luke 1:50). ✞

Jeril (Polly) Cline is a writer and preacher's wife living in Blue Ridge, Georgia, USA.

A child may not inherit his parents' talents but he will absorb their values.

The Silent Cries

Betty Burton Choate

All around, this little world of my existence
Seems quite normal.
Friends and strangers meet in passing;
Faces smile in greeting,
Hellos, goodbyes are said as, day by day,
We go about the work of life.

But sin,
Insidious in its horrors,
Turning all it touches upside down,
Has seeped like blood stains
Into every crack and every crevice
Of the world,
And left its reddened mark
In every life.

Because of sin
Catastrophe
Became a part of Nature's law;
Raging storms, torrential rains,
Leave havoc in their wake
And death reigns over all
— trees and flowers, man and beast —
The universe itself
Grows old and dies.

Yet, our ears are poorly tuned
To hear the sound of death;
Mostly there is silence,
Studded here and there
With surface talk or laughter;
Seldom do we hear the pain.

But sometimes,
Crowding in on mundane thoughts
I feel the grief of other hearts:
Of loved ones snatched in death

Or lingering in that twilight
— month by month —
In bodies groaning for release.

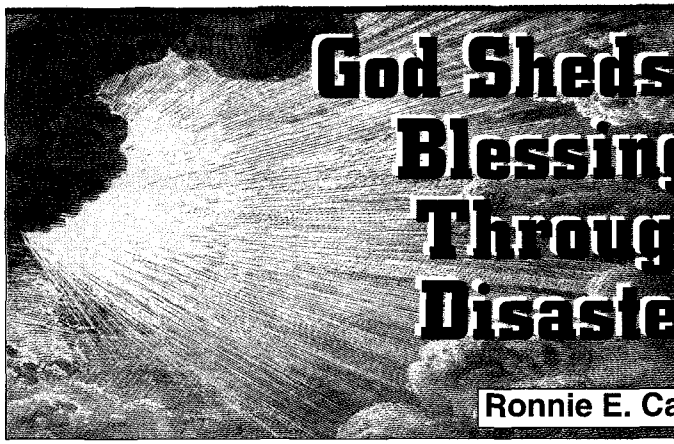
I think of war,
Of young men killed
And wives and parents blown apart inside,
Yet somehow living on.

I think of crime,
Of children, brutalized,
Who turn to brutes themselves
—poor, poor wretches who, from youth to death,
Have lived such pain
The soul itself
Was sucked up and destroyed.

I think of those who wait
— parents of the missing,
Mates of those thought dead —
And, oh, their wait,
Wearisome and long,
Is living death!

I think
— my head is reeling with the thinking —
In every heart, in every life,
Of almost every soul about me,
Some hurt, some pain is crying out,
Sometimes shrieking, groaning,
Sometimes nothing but a whimper
Needing to be heard,
Yet silent to the human ear.

How the clamor
And the din
Of all those ceaseless cries
Must tear God's heart,
Who hears
and cares,
and waits in longing for the day
When sin will plague humanity no more.



God Sheds His Blessings Through Disaster

Ronnie E. Carter

Hurricane Mitch, as is true of all major disasters, was an event that changed many lives forever. When Mitch came ashore in Honduras, the primary focus of Mision del Caribe (MdC) was the operation of a youth camp in support of our summer program called "Journada." Through the Journada program, it is the goal of MdC to expose young people to the mission field and provide them the opportunity to serve others in outreach projects to the community, schools, and to members of the local congregations.

Hurricane Mitch roared right across our facility, and while we did not sustain serious damage, MdC was catapulted into a major role as a relief agency. Our camp was used first to house refugees, and our volunteer staff in the States began immediately to raise funds and to make plans for the shipment of relief supplies. Over the next several weeks, MdC was to ship or facilitate the shipment of more than twenty containers of relief materials. In the year that followed, we would build more than 200 homes and repair as many as 800 more. We repaired schools, allowing nearly a thousand students to return to their classrooms months before others would do so (many still are unable to return).

In the early hours of Mitch, MdC learned some of its first and most valuable lessons of relief work. **First, we found that money, rather than donated goods, allowed for a more efficient response.** Certainly there is a place in relief work for donated goods, but we found that in the early stages a flow of goods which have to be collected, sorted, sized, packaged, and re-shipped takes a tremendous

amount of coordination, physical labor, and logistics. With cash, on the other hand, purchases can be made based on the needs of the victims at the time, and energy is focused on meeting those immediate needs rather than on items which may meet a need which is many weeks away.

Our second lesson, and the most valuable of the experience, was that ability to distribute goods in the disaster area is a tremendous asset not soon forgotten by those receiving the help. For some fifteen years before Mitch, a sister organization to MdC, Escuela Biblica Honduras (EBH), had been in the business of training church leaders in eastern Honduras. It was through this network of EBH-trained church leaders that MdC was able to effectively distribute the relief goods which were shipped and purchased, and it was because the work was accomplished principally through and with the cooperation of the local churches that people in the community came to better know the churches and what they stood for.

Now, more than a year later and looking back, it is plain to see that *God used all of the work that had gone before to accomplish His mission through the disaster named Mitch.* It was humbling to see how He used the blend of experiences that we all brought to the table and how He used the many unique individuals who were in place to weave the tapestry of His will.

Those of us who were involved in responding to the disaster know that what was done was not done of our own strength, but only through the blessings of God's providence.

Because of Mitch, we have seen a tremendous strengthening of the church in Honduras and other parts of Central America. We have witnessed and experienced the planting of nineteen new congregations, just in our small area of work in Eastern Honduras. We now have a medical clinic in operation under the directorship of a Christian physician, and we have unprecedented opportunities to work with the children in the Honduran public school system. In addition to the immediate challenges, we are all intently aware of the tremendous opportunities which yet remain to develop. Truly we can say that Mitch has changed lives forever, and only God can know how many more churches will be the result and how many more souls may be touched throughout Central America because of a disaster named Mitch. ✝

Ronnie E. Carter is the President of Mision del Caribe and serves as an elder for the Bayou Oaks church of Christ in Slidell, Louisiana, USA.



Each Life Some Rain Must Fall

Dale Grissom

In a perfect world, everything in life would go smoothly. We would enjoy only the good, never having to deal with the bad. Life in this world was never intended to be perfect, however. As the old saying goes, "There's a bitter with every sweet." Life has its hard knocks, and we must learn to deal with them.

Christians have been blessed with so much in our lives — perhaps not always of a material nature, but certainly of the spiritual. We have **peace in the Lord** (John. 16:33). We have **the hope of eternal life,** the most wonderful blessing available to mankind (Revelation 2:10). And we have **the Bible** — the road map to heaven — which guides us in the right way.

There is much suffering in this world. Not only are our physical bodies subject to disease and pain, but we may also suffer emotionally as we deal with family problems, job stress, etc. Failure to deal with these problems can lead to depression, and, unfortunately, Christians are not exempt.

There are many avenues of support for the hurting, and those who need help should avail themselves of effective means. Prescription medication, for example, can ease both physical and emotional suffering. Or the problems may be of such a nature that good Christian counseling would be of benefit. Countless individuals and families have been helped through counseling.

Whatever our problems may be, all of us need to be reminded that the truly "good life" is found in Christ Jesus. While it is indeed true that "into each life some rain must fall," it is also evident that the way we handle the trials we face is an indication of our maturity as Christians. Let each of us resolve to be *students of the Word* so that we may be equipped for whatever comes our way. ✞

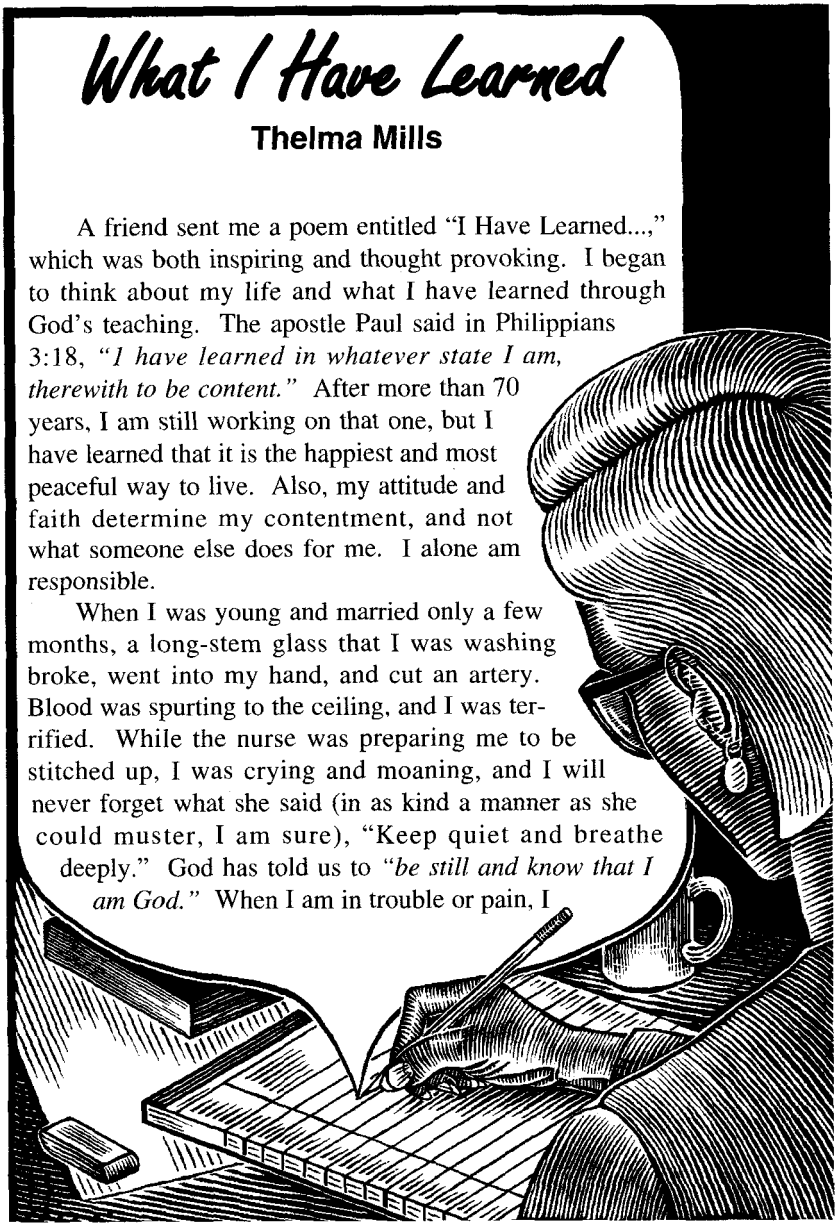
Dale Grissom works with the Lord's church in Dexter, Missouri, USA, in personal evangelism and counseling those who are struggling.

What I Have Learned

Thelma Mills

A friend sent me a poem entitled "I Have Learned...," which was both inspiring and thought provoking. I began to think about my life and what I have learned through God's teaching. The apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:18, *"I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content."* After more than 70 years, I am still working on that one, but I have learned that it is the happiest and most peaceful way to live. Also, my attitude and faith determine my contentment, and not what someone else does for me. I alone am responsible.

When I was young and married only a few months, a long-stem glass that I was washing broke, went into my hand, and cut an artery. Blood was spurting to the ceiling, and I was terrified. While the nurse was preparing me to be stitched up, I was crying and moaning, and I will never forget what she said (in as kind a manner as she could muster, I am sure), "Keep quiet and breathe deeply." God has told us to *"be still and know that I am God."* When I am in trouble or pain, I



need to clear my mind of distractions and dwell on the power and love of God. There is then a calm and a strength that cannot be found any other way.

After many years filled with both happiness and sorrow, I found that I was very ill. A panel of 15 doctors was baffled by a biopsy, but after several tests and consultations, they told me that I had "Midline Lethal Granuloma". The word *"lethal"* describes it — it kills its victim within a couple of years. It destroys tissue, beginning in the respiratory system, going to the lungs, and then to the kidneys. The only patients they had known about had lived approximately two years. Our children were coming home for the holidays, and the doctors advised telling them so they would have time to get used to the idea. We realized that the doctors were taking this seriously.

We all know that death can be just around the corner, but when you are told that you have a disease that kills rather quickly, you necessarily will react in some way. It is hard to describe my feelings. First there was shock and denial, then great sadness to think about leaving my family. However, I realized that God had given me many good years, and my children were grown. I knew that death is a part of this life, and with a lot of prayer and the loving support of my husband, there came a time of peace and acceptance. Never have the hymns about heaven and eternity with God been more precious to me, as I began to dwell more on God's promises to His children. (Read John 14:1-3.)

Obviously I lived through that ordeal. The diagnosis proved to be incorrect, but it was quite a long time before another diagnosis was made, and in the meantime, we had had to face the possibility of imminent death. We asked our Christian friends for prayers, and I believe those prayers saved my life. The disease I did have was very serious and can be deadly, but it is treatable, and in my case there was a remission. I want to say that *the only time I found peace* during that period of turmoil and emotional upheaval was when I could truly say, *"Father, not my will, but thine be done..."*

Recently I had serious complications during eye surgery, which left me in excruciating pain for weeks, followed by three more surgeries, complete loss of vision in the injured eye, and continuing discomfort.

It may be hard to understand but, in a way, loss of sight in my eye has been a more difficult adjustment for me than facing the death that would have resulted from Midline Lethal Granuloma. As a person who was an avid reader, loved crafts,

sewing, and painting, there have been many permanent changes in my life.

Acceptance and endurance are things I have learned through this. I know that God is in control of this universe and that He has better things prepared for me in eternity. God has blessed me with so many good things that I have to say, "Whatsoever state I am in, I *am learning* therewith to be content." ✞

Thelma Mills and her husband Roger live in Florence, Alabama, USA. and work with World Evangelism.

"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."
1 Timothy 6:6-8

Thy Word Is a Lamp

Victor Scott

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet",
And tho' the way be dark
If I will keep it as my guide
I'll someday reach that mark
That Thou hast set for me to reach
By doing all Thy will,
Though dark and stormy be the night,
And stony be the hill.
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet",
Christ took that path, before;
The burdens now that trouble me
Are lighter than He bore,
He reaches out a hand to me
To hold me close to Him,
And, oh, the path that seemed so dark
Is now no longer dim.
Will-o'-the-wisps that beckon me
But lead the deadly way,
"There is a way that seemeth right
But ends in death," You say.
So help me carry the lamp You give,
And keep on the path, I pray,
In the name of the One who went before,
And is guiding me on the way.



One kangaroo mother was talking to another and said, "I really dread those rainy days when the kids can't play outside."



Some office signs:

◆ To err is human. To really foul things up requires a computer.

◆ Please don't rush me. I'm making mistakes as fast as I can.

◆ Tell me again how much I love working here. I keep forgetting.

◆ A bad day of golf is better than a good day of work.



A rich banker died and his family met in the attorney's office for the reading of the Will. The banker left $500,000 to his wife, $50,000 each to his brothers and sisters, etc. The Will went on to read, "...and to my nephew Ralph, who always wanted to be mentioned in my Will, I say, 'Hello, Ralph.'"



The following are actual statements found on insurance forms where drivers attempted to summarize details of accidents.

● "I had been driving for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident."

● "I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment."



A speaker began by saying, "I will speak only fifteen minutes at most because of my throat. If I go longer, some of you might try to strangle it."



Did you hear about the proud mother who was bragging about her son's position on the football team? "He's one of the drawbacks," she proclaimed proudly.

Perhaps you didn't hear about the preacher who met a big bear way out in the woods. Luckily, the preacher started one of his sermons, and the bear fell asleep.



Two women were discussing the gubernatorial race. One finally said, "Well, it looks very close to me. In fact, it could be a throw-up."



A small boy went with his father to the Post Office and became curious about the "wanted" posters on display.

"Those are people who have broken the law and the police are trying to catch them," his father explained.

"Well," the boy responded, "why didn't the police just keep them when they took those pictures?"



A man was asked, "Who is the boss in your home?" He replied, "Well, my wife bosses the kids, the kids boss the dog, and I say pretty well what I please to the geraniums."

I always look forward to the vacation season, just wondering what strange and exotic lands my luggage will visit.



A couple drove several miles down a country road, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument, and neither wanted to concede their position.

As they passed a barnyard of mules and pigs, the wife sarcastically asked, "Relatives of yours?"

"Yep," the husband answered. "In-laws."



A man went to Washington for a meeting regarding a political appointment. "What can you do," asked his interviewer. "Nothing, really," replied the job-seeker.

"That's wonderful," was the reply. "We won't even have to train you."



"He's such a great speaker, I'd rather hear him speak than eat."

"Me, too. I sat at the head table with him. I've heard him eat."

Step By Step Into Sin

Betty Tucker

***"Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold"* (2 Samuel 11:2).**

Bible students are familiar with the story. King David was walking upon his rooftop and beheld a beautiful maiden as she bathed across the way on her rooftop (2 Samuel 11:2).

Overcome by lust (verse 4), the king committed adultery with Bathsheba. They were caught in their sin, for she conceived (verse 5). Now, this worthy monarch had real troubles!

Desperate about his problem, King David began his step-by-step journey even further into sin. He devised a plan to cover up their affair. We learn of his devious plot in chapter 11, verses 6-13, and how it was thwarted by Uriah, husband of Bathsheba.

Since he was king, David had power to make things happen. He arranged for Uriah's death by putting him in the thickest of battles, then withdrawing the troops, leaving Uriah to face death. Though the king did not deliver the blow with his own hands, he was directly responsible for the man's death (verses 15-24).

Taking an objective look at this story, we note how David moved from one phase to another in his journey into sin:

* David saw Bathsheba (so far, he has not sinned).
* He lusted in his heart (he is guilty of sin).
* He took her unto him (now, adultery is involved).
* David had Uriah killed (he is guilty of murder)!

We can hardly read Psalm 51 without tear-filled eyes, as David begs a merciful Father's forgiveness...

1. *"I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."*
2. *"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight..."*

3. *"Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."*
4. *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

God forgave David when he confessed his sin (2 Samuel 12:13). However, the king had to live with the consequences of his sins. **God does not play favorites! Though He forgives sin, He has never promised to remove from our lives the direct consequences of the sins we have committed. He can only help us to bear them and to learn from them.**

The prophet Nathan said, *"Evil will rise up against you out of your own house"* (verse 11). David learned by sad experience, *"Be sure your sin will find you out"* (Numbers 32:23).

The precious baby born of David and Bathsheba's adulterous act died (verse 18). David prayed and fasted and begged God to spare the baby, but to no avail.

David had another son, Absalom. He was very handsome, and he wore his long hair with pride. But he was a rebellious son, and he sought to take away his father's throne (2 Samuel 15:10).

In the course of a battle, Absalom was caught up into the branches of an oak tree and left suspended in the air, supported only by his long hair. Joab, captain of David's army, pierced his heart with three darts (2 Samuel 18:15).

When David was told of his son's death, we hear the pitiable cry ring out — *"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"* (verse 33).

David wanted to build the temple, but God told him that he could not. We learn in 2 Chronicles 22:7-10 that because he had shed blood abundantly, he was unworthy for this privilege. It was left to his son, Solomon, to build the temple.

We have followed this man David as he struggled with the results of his sin that began with an innocent walk upon the rooftop of the palace. Much of his life was involved in trying to overcome the consequences of the sin that engulfed him in a weak moment.

May we learn from this king to be ever watchful, and to guard against the enticements of the wicked one. Peter, by inspiration, wrote: *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). ✞

Betty Tucker is the wife of a gospel preacher, and they live in Linden, Tennessee, USA.

Fornication and Adultery

Max Patterson

***"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery"* (Matthew 19:9).**

There are all kinds of ideas as to who commits fornication and who commits adultery. A widely accepted idea is that fornication is a sin committed between unmarried people and that adultery is the same sin committed between married people. Even the dictionary essentially gives this definition.

The Greek word for fornication in the New Testament is a broad and general word. Arndt and Gingrich define this word as "every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse." Therefore, it may involve harlotry, adultery, and various kinds of lewdness and uncleanness, such as homosexuality. Adultery is a more specific word in the New Testament and involves sexual immorality usually among married people.

It is important to keep in mind the general and specific meanings of fornication and adultery. When Jesus said that a man who puts away his wife, except for fornication, and marries another commits adultery, what He is saying is that the exception includes all that is in the broader definition of fornication. Obviously, as alluded to above, there are all kinds of meanings to fornication — including every form of sexual deviation, such as incest, homosexuality, perversion, and also adultery itself.

If Jesus had said "except for *adultery*" in Matthew 19:9, then this would have very much limited what would have to take place for a divorce and remarriage to have the approval of God.

If we are to remain faithful to the Lord of Life, let us not be putting our souls in jeopardy by unwise actions. ✞

Max Patterson is a gospel preacher living in Neosho, Missouri, USA.

Therefore — Again

T. Pierce Brown

***"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom"* (Matthew 5:19)**

A few days ago I wrote an article on the word "therefore" as it is used in the Great Commission, and some of the implications of it. The implications are so far-reaching that I decided to look at some other examples of "therefore" in the New Testament. I was shocked to realize that it would take a book, rather than an article, to deal with all the significant passages where "therefore" plays an important part in the message.

Because I do not want to dwell on the sometimes slight and sometimes significant differences in the Greek words that are translated "therefore," such as "alla," "ara," "gar," "de," "dio," etc., I will only mention a few cases where the word "oun," translated "therefore" in the Great Commission, is used. I hope this will cause many of you to look more carefully at the more than 437 times the conjunction "oun" is used in the New Testament, and think more deeply on each "therefore" and what precedes and follows it. It is usually preceded by some important statement of truth and followed by what should be recognized as a consequence of that truth.

Notice some examples of it. In Matthew 5:18, we read, *"For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."* Now notice verse 19, *"Whosoever* ***therefore*** *shall break one of these least commandments and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom."* Because of the nature of God's law, He uses "therefore" to emphasize the consequences of breaking or keeping it. The principle is still true.

Just because God's grace abounds, and because we cannot be justified on the basis of having kept

all of God's law, we are in no sense to assume that any law of God which is applicable today is insignificant.

In Matthew 5:48 we are told, *"Be ye **therefore** perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* To what does "therefore" refer? He has just finished telling us to love our enemies that we may be *"children of your Father which is in heaven."* When one has learned how to love his enemies, bless those who curse, and do good to those who persecute, and thus demonstrates that he is a son of God, he is **therefore** perfect — mature and God-like. It is in consequence of the fact that one wants to be like God that he will **therefore** do that which will make him *perfect* — that is, it will make him *mature* and *complete* in that respect.

In Matthew 6:33,34 we are told, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take **therefore** no thought (be not anxious) for tomorrow..."* Do you not see the wonderful connection between the truth that if, indeed, you seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, He will provide for all your material needs? Then, **as a result of your awareness of and belief of** that wonderful truth, you can **therefore** be free from anxiety about those physical things.

In Matthew 9:37,38 we find, *"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye **therefore** the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."* Two reasons are given in this passage for the prayer He enjoins upon us: There are *many persons out there who would accept salvation* if you would properly present it to them. But *the laborers are few.* Even hundreds who attend workshops do not really labor in the vineyard, but apparently just go to be inspired or "turned on." At any rate, because the harvest is *plenteous* and the laborers *few,* we **therefore** should pray. But, of course, prayer is worth very little if we are not willing to be used of God to answer the prayer.

How many hundreds of times have you quoted, or heard quoted in sermons, *"Whosoever **therefore** shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"*? Did you ever really think of the thing to which the "therefore" referred? Read the preceding verses. It is *because a disciple is of more value than many sparrows.* Jesus values you so much that if you confess by your words and actions that you are His, He will **therefore** do the same before God!

In Matthew 18:4 we hear Jesus

say, *"Whosoever **therefore** shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* The "therefore" refers back to His statement in verse 3 that *"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."* If that statement is so (and it is), then **therefore** we had better humble ourselves and become trusting, obedient, loving, childlike disciples. You may notice that He says, ***"Except ye be converted** and become like little children."* It would really take *some* conversion for many of us! But the "except" and "therefore" together make a powerful argument for our doing just that.

This is but a very small sample of the hundreds of places where a "therefore" from God emphasizes and highlights the value of some statement He has just made. Why not study some of them for yourself? God's message is fascinating! ✞

T. Pierce Brown lives and teaches and preaches in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.

Submission

Charles R. Brewer

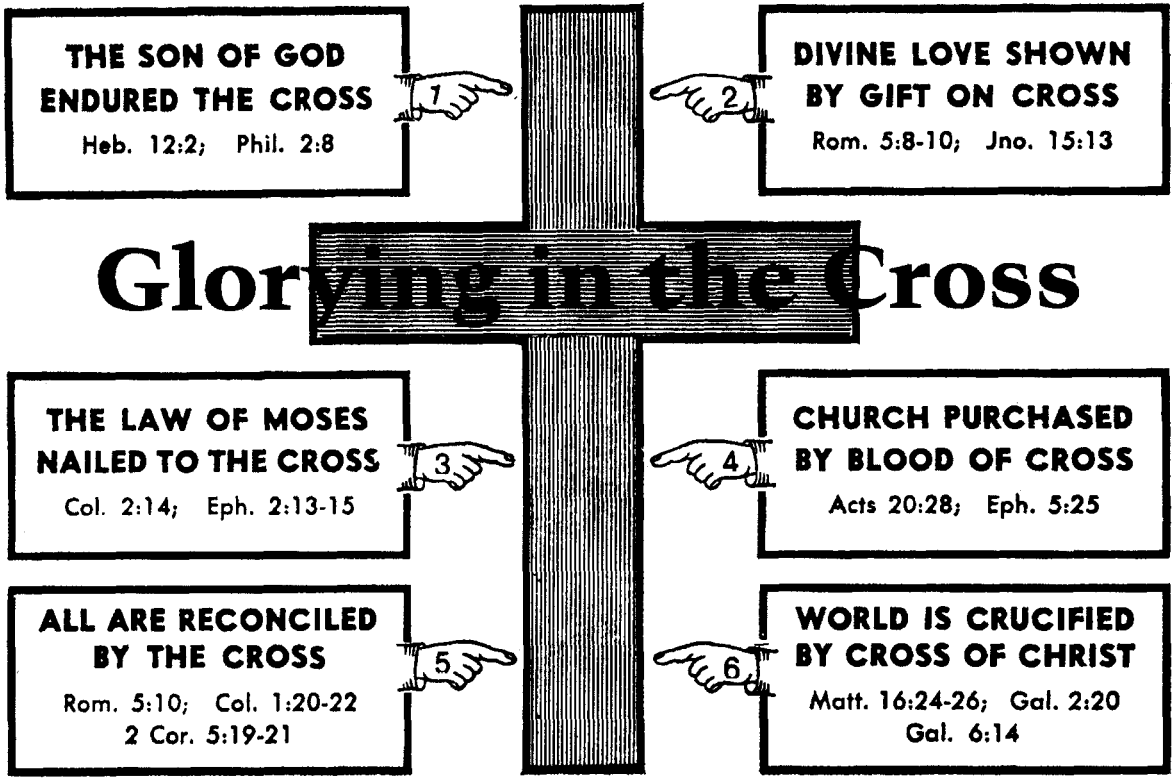
O, Master, bid me come to Thee,
When winds are high and billows roll,
And naught but dangers round I see,
And tempests overwhelm my soul.

Across the gathering of the storm,
Make faith — submissive to Thy will —
Behold the coming of Thy form,
And hear Thy voice say, "Peace, be still."

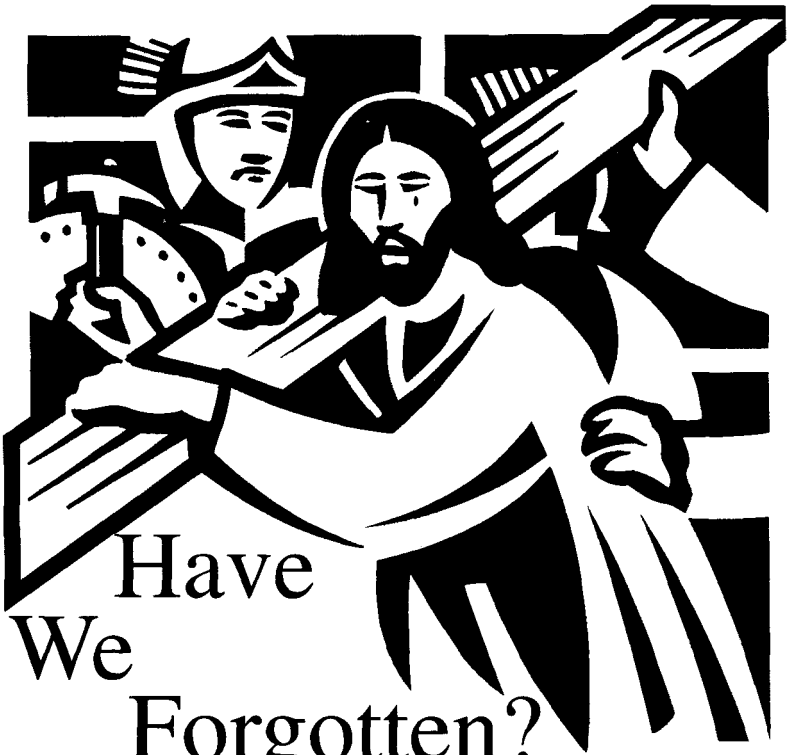
I stumble oft in wavering faith,
And all but sink beneath the tide;
Lord, lift me from the way of death,
And draw me closer to Thy side.

Increase my faith to walk the waves,
As did Thy servant long ago,
And find sustaining strength that saves,
And love that washes white as snow.

Be it mine to hear, and Thine to call,
Thine to show the pathway home,
Mine to say, what e'er befall:
"I hear Thee, Master, and I come."



Dillard Thurman



Have We Forgotten?

Deuteronomy 6:10-12

Ken Tyler

PURPOSE: To show the importance of remembering what your purpose in life is.

I. Have we forgotten that our greatest need is the forgiveness of sins (Mark 8:36-37)?

A. Sin separates us from God and condemns us to hell (Isaiah 59:1,2; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8).

1. Each of us must deal with sin (Romans 3:23).
2. Are you forgiven (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Acts 8:37; Acts 2:38)?

II. Have we forgotten the price that was paid for our sins? (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:19)?

A. When we remember and understand what has been done for us it will change our lives (1 John 4:19).

1. Matthew 1:21; John 1:29; John 3:16; Luke 19:10; Luke 22:41-44; 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:15.
2. Are you remembering what Jesus has done for you (John 14:15; 15:14)?

III. Have we forgotten that Christians are different from the world (1 John 2:15-17)?

A. Far too many are worshipping on Sunday and living like the devil on Monday (James 4:4).

1. We must be righteous people (Romans 12:1,2; Galatians 5:24).
2. What kind of life are you living?

IV. Have we forgotten there is a heaven and hell (Matthew 25:46; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Matthew 23:33)?

A. Most people have put eternity on the back burner — it is not important to them or they do not even believe it exists (Daniel 2:28).

1. What do heaven and hell mean to you?
2. You are going to one of these places!

CONCLUSION: *"Remember now thy creator..."* are great words. Are you remembering?

Ken Tyler preaches for the church in Wanganui, New Zealand.

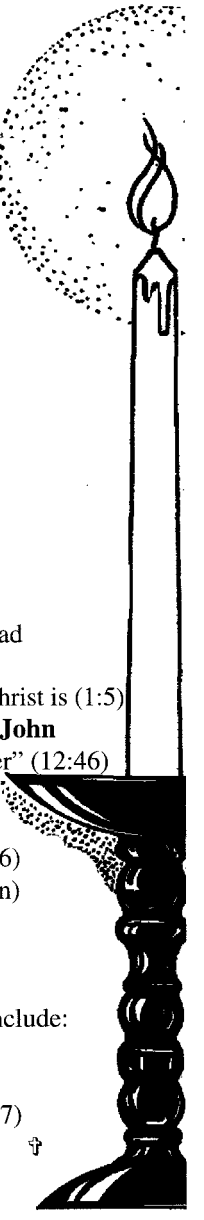
To These I Commit My Day

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To these I commit my day. If I succeed, I will give thanks. If I fail, I will seek His grace. And then, when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest. I choose God. — **Selected**

The Light of the World

John 12:46

Neal Pollard



Introduction:

A. Jesus was performing miracles and they weren't believing (37). Jesus called them blind (40). Why (43)?

B. Many images of Christ in John:
 1. Life (11:25)
 2. Bread (6:48)
 3. Way (14:6)
 4. Door (10:1)
 5. Shepherd (10:11)

C. Lead Statement: "From this verse we learn...

I. Jesus Came to Earth

A. Jesus took on flesh (1:14)
 1. To dwell among us (1:14)
 2. To show us His divine glory (1:14)
 3. To introduce us to a new way (1:17)

B. Jesus existed before He became flesh (1:1-3,15)
 1. Fully divine, co-eternal member of the Godhead

II. Jesus Came Where There Was Darkness

A. Darkness means lack of understanding about who Christ is (1:5)

III. Jesus Came As a Light — "light" found 24 times in John

A. That Light is for everybody (Scope) — "whosoever" (12:46)
 1. Here is an implicit reference to evangelism (cf. Romans 1:16)

B. That Light is for the world (Sin) "the world" (12:46)

C. That Light is for the Transformation (Sanctification) — "not remain" (12:46)
 1. Romans 12:1,2

Conclusion

A. Since Jesus came as a Light into the world, we conclude:
 1. There was a time when there was darkness
 2. There was a need for light
 3. There is a need to walk in that light (1 John 1:7)

B. Invitation

Neal Pollard is the preacher for the Cold Harbor Road church of Christ in Mechanicsville, Virginia, USA.

Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc.

When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word.

1. **100** I am mentioned in three books of the Bible (Acts, 1 Corinthians, and Titus).
2. **90** I was a Jew, born in Alexandria (Acts 18:24).
3. **80** I had a great knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, and was an able defender of my convictions (V. 24).
4. **70** I lived in the city of Ephesus for awhile (V. 24).



5. **60** A Christian man and his wife heard me teaching about Jesus (V. 25).
6. **50** Realizing that my knowledge of the Lord was incomplete, they took me aside and taught me the gospel (V. 25).
7. **40** I had heard and accepted only the baptism of repentance, looking forward to the coming Savior, as John had taught, not knowing that Christ had come already (V. 26).
8. **30** Later, when I traveled through Greece, the church received me and I was able to do much teaching to Christians, strengthening those who had believed through God's grace (V. 27).
9. **20** Because of my knowledge of the prophecies of the Old Testament, I was able to mightily convince the Jews that Jesus is the Christ (V. 28).
10. **10** In Corinth, some of the Christians respected me so much that they wanted to call themselves after my name (1 Corinthians 3:4,5).

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.

Who Could Be An Apostle of Jesus Christ?

John Thiesen

In the New Testament we often read of the apostles of Christ. Sometimes people are confused about this term and get it mixed up with the word "disciple". A disciple is a "learner" or student, whereas "apostle" meant "one sent forth". All followers, including the apostles, were disciples or students of Jesus. But not all disciples were apostles.

Apostles Were Eyewitnesses of Christ

An apostle was a man personally chosen by Jesus to be a witness of His resurrection. Originally, twelve were chosen when the Lord began His ministry. Others were added later, after His resurrection and return to heaven. All the apostles had one thing in common: **they were personal eyewitnesses of Jesus.**

On the night of His betrayal, while He was still in the upper room with His apostles, Jesus told them: *"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning"* (John 15:27). These men had not simply heard about Jesus secondhand, but they had daily been with Him, walked where He walked, had eaten and slept where He did, watched Him as He was crucified, and they had seen Him after His resurrection. On the strength of their eyewitness testimony, men and woman in the ages to come would learn of Christ.

How Christ Chose Apostles

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus personally called the apostles one by one. After His death, the apostles needed to find a man to replace Judas, the apostle who had betrayed Christ to death. But it was required that the replacement must have seen and been with Christ personally. So, the apostles said, *"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same*

day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:21,22).

Years afterward, one final apostle of Christ was called. The man chosen by Jesus Himself was Saul of Tarsus, whose name later was changed to Paul. Jesus appeared visibly to Saul and told him, *"For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee"* (Acts 26:16).

Paul was the last apostle Jesus chose. He said of himself, *"And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time"* (1 Corinthians 15:8). With Paul the quorum was complete, so that anyone claiming to be an apostle today is an imposter. It is through these men's testimony, written in the New Testament, that you and I come to believe in Jesus Christ. ✞

John Thiesen is a former missionary to Malawi and now preaches for the Lord's church in Buffalo, Missouri, USA.

A Called People

Though no one is called to be an apostle today, nevertheless, Christians are a 'called' people.

- *He called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, so we could show forth His praise* (1 Peter 2:9).
- *We have been called to follow the example of Christ, even if we must suffer for our dedication* (1 Peter 2:21).
- *We have been called as heirs to inherit a blessing, so we should use our lives to bless others* (1 Peter 3:9).
- *Our God who called us is Holy, so we must be holy in our speech and manner of life* (1 Peter 1:15).
- *The God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory in Christ, and He will strengthen those who are His* (1 Peter 5:10).

The emphasis Peter makes is always on the fact that we are called by God, by the gospel, and that we have a work to do. Our task is to be obedient to our calling, and to be faithful to Him in all things, as His own dear children (2 Thessalonians 2:13-17). — BBC

Should a lady be called a "preacher"?

Royce Frederick

To teach God's word accurately, we must use Bible words in the same way God uses them (see 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2; 2:15).

The Bible does not use the word "preacher" to refer to a lady. The Bible uses the word "preacher" to refer to a **man** who proclaims God's message (1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Peter 2:5). But ladies are **never** called "preachers" in the Bible.

All Christians, including ladies, should grow in the knowledge of God's word (2 Peter 3:18). All Christians should teach others about Christ by their words and deeds (Mark 16:15-16; Hebrews 5:12-14; Matthew 5:16). But the Bible sets limits regarding ladies teaching others.

God's word does not permit ladies to "preach" publicly to men. The Bible often tells about men preaching God's word to crowds of men and women (Matthew 4:17; 10:7; 14:14; Acts 8:12; 17:2-4, 10-12). But the Bible clearly teaches that a woman must not be the speaker, speaking to men in the assembly of the church: *"Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence"* (1 Timothy 2:11,12). *"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church"* (1 Corinthians 14:34,35). The word "church" refers to the people who have been "called out" by the gospel. In the Bible, "church" never means a physical building. In verse 34, *"in the church"* means "in the assembly" of Christians. A woman must not be the speaker, speaking to men "in the church."

"Preach" means "proclaim" or "declare." When the Christians were persecuted in Jerusalem, *"...those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). Christian ladies were certainly among *"those who were scattered"* (see verse 3; Acts 22:4). **Ladies should teach and proclaim the gospel to other ladies:** *"the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slander-*

ers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5). Ladies should also teach children (see 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14,15). Ladies who teach God's word to other ladies or children should be called "teachers." People who hear that a lady calls herself a "preacher" may think she preaches publicly to men, disobeying God's instructions to ladies.

A lady can privately discuss God's word with a man and help him understand the truth. Priscilla and her husband talked privately with Apollos: *"...he* (Apollos) *began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately"* (Acts 18:26). This verse clearly tells us that both Aquila and Priscilla explained God's word to Apollos. And notice that they did not shame Apollos in the presence of the Jewish audience while he was speaking. Instead, they *"took him aside"* to talk privately with him.

We should give thanks to God for the multitudes of Christian ladies who have brought thousands of souls to Christ by their thoughtful teaching and godly lives. May God grant us many more ladies who are willing to live for Christ and teach *"the way of God more accurately."*✝

Royce Frederick is the editor of *International Gospel Teacher* and lives in Lufkin, TX, USA.

A Morning Prayer

Help me, O Lord, to climb the hill
That I must climb today.
Help me to know and do Thy will
And walk Thy narrow way.

Help me to lighten someone's load,
And make me glad to share
The work my brother has to do
And show him that I care.

Help me to always live a life
That shows Thy light divine;
To think more of my neighbor's cares
And somewhat less of mine.

Help me to walk with Thee each day,
To love Thee more and more.
And some day, take me to my home
On Heaven's peaceful shore.

— E.C. Patton



Belgium

at the heart of Europe

Roy Davidson

Tongeren, the oldest city in Belgium, was established by the Romans in 15 B.C. Because of its location at the intersection of four Roman roads, it remained an important Roman administrative, commercial and military center until the fifth century.

Christians were probably in Tongeren as a minority before the end of the first century. Early Christians usually met in homes or in rented halls. Their first buildings in "Belgica" (the Roman designation for Belgium) would have been plain wooden structures. The earliest remains of stone church buildings date from the fourth century after Constantine espoused Christianity. Tongeren played an important role in the earliest "Christianizing" of the surrounding area. Along with political patronage came political influence and secularization. As the Roman Empire lost its

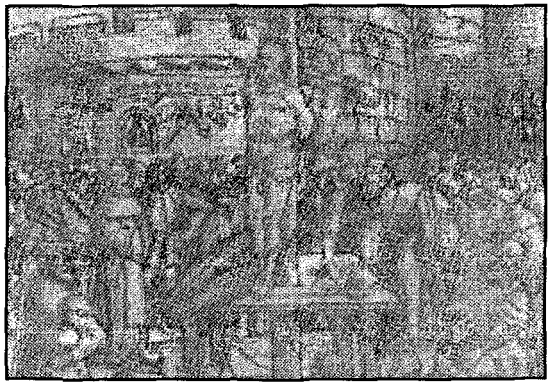
power, the Roman Church gained political power in Belgium, as it did throughout Europe. The "official" Roman form of Christianity moved farther and farther away from the spiritual, non-political teachings of Christ.

Because of Belgium's strategic military location at the crossroads of Europe, through the centuries it has been a favorite place for other countries to fight their wars! Since the time of the Romans, the local people have usually been subjected to the foreign domination of some "neighbor" who happened to be powerful at the time.

This crossroads location had a commercial advantage, however, and by the thirteenth century Flanders had become one of the most densely populated and wealthy areas of Europe. This growth was based on the export of Flemish cloth, lace and tapestry which were renowned for their exceptional beauty and quality. The city of Bruges was then the leading harbor and commercial center of Northern Europe. The wealthy cities of Bruges, Gent and Antwerp were able to demand certain "rights" from the monarchs in exchange for their taxes. These charters formed a basis for the future development of democratic principles.

By the fifteenth century, Belgium had become a center of intellectual and artistic activity. The European invention of movable type by Laurens Janszoon Koster in Holland around 1430 (it had existed in Korea 50 years earlier), greatly increased the circulation of books and the level of learning in Europe. Books by religious reformers could easily be distributed.

William Tyndale, who wanted to publish an English translation of the Bible, had to flee from England to Germany. After completing his translation, he established himself at Antwerp, Belgium where his English Bibles were printed before being smuggled into England. Catholic authorities in Belgium, however, arrested him in 1535 and he was burned at the stake at Vilvoorde, Belgium in 1536.



William Tyndale was burned at the stake for his translation of the New Testament.

The Scriptures were also translated into French and Dutch. People discovered that the Roman Catholic Church was completely different from the church Jesus had established. By the middle of the sixteenth century, many people in the Low Lands (Belgium and Holland) had recognized that the Roman Church was apostate and were attempting to serve God according to the Scriptures.

To protect the power of the Roman Church, it was declared illegal to read or discuss the Scriptures. Men caught doing so were burned at the stake, women were buried alive. If they repented they were shown "mercy" by being strangled before being burned or buried. When some local officials in Belgium were hesitant to carry out these orders and requested respect for the rights granted by their ancient charters, Philip II of Spain sent an army to Belgium under the Duke of Alva to strictly enforce the Inquisition and to subjugate the country. As a consequence, large numbers fled to Holland, including the leading merchants and intellectuals who took their capital and knowledge with them. Thousands of non-Catholics were murdered, and many people feigned devotion to Catholicism to save their lives. Thus Belgium was "purged" of non-Catholics and entered a period of commercial and cultural decline.

During the following centuries Belgium was under a succession of foreign rulers until it gained independence in 1830. It was occupied by foreign powers again during the First and Second World Wars.

Belgium is presently a modern democracy with complete religious freedom. It is a member of the European Union which has its administrative headquarters at Brussels.

King Baudouin I

Baudouin was born on September 7, 1930. He became king of Belgium on July 17, 1951. He married Dona Fabiola de Mora y Aragon of Spain in 1960. Baudouin and Fabiola were known for their genuine concern for the welfare of the people and for their high moral standards.

In 1990 when the Roman Catholic political party of Belgium voted to legalize abortion, Baudouin refused to sign the law, which he was constitutionally obligated to do. He said he had to obey a higher law than the law of Belgium. He abdicated and the parliament designated someone else to sign the law in the absence of a king. Baudouin was then reinstated as king the next day!

When Baudouin died from heart failure in 1993 he was deeply mourned

by the Belgian people. The memorial and statue pictured on the cover were financed by private contributions. The statue, sculptured by Wilfried Pas, shows Baudouin bowing. The park, with 99 cherry trees and one weeping willow, was designed by the Jo Crepain Architect Bureau of Antwerp.

The Lord's Church in Belgium Today

There are Dutch, French, and English speaking churches of Christ.

Dutch: Ostend, Roeselare, Bruges, Antwerp, Rijmenam, Hasselt, Rotselaar.
French: Verviers, Liege, Brussels, La Docherie.
English: Brussels, Shape.

Dutch-Speaking Churches: Some History . . .

[NOTE: In reading the following accounts, notice how exactly the effective outreach of the various Christians corresponds with the observations discussed in CHURCH GROWTH. These methods will win souls anywhere in this world, during any age. Only conviction and faithful work are required.]

Ostend

In June of 1960 several families at Ostend left the Jehovah's Witnesses when they realized they were not following the Scriptures. They decided to meet in their homes and follow the Bible as their only guide.

One of the men saw an ad in a French magazine placed by Christians in Paris that said: **The Bible is neither Catholic nor Protestant, and you can be a Christian without being either a Catholic or a Protestant.** That was what they were trying to do, so they responded to the ad.

Since they spoke Flemish (Dutch) their address was sent to Bill Richardson in Holland who arranged to visit them in the fall of 1960. When he arrived, there was a group of almost twenty people waiting to hear him. They had fifteen questions for him. They had agreed among themselves to listen without comment as he answered each question. Everything was recorded on tape. They told brother Richardson they would study what he had said and might contact him again.

Actually, they had asked test questions to see if he was teaching the

truth. They were amazed that he answered each question exactly as their own Bible study indicated it should be answered. But they did not reveal this because they had agreed not to respond in any way on his first visit, and also because they wanted to go over each question again before making a final decision. In about six weeks, after having a Bible study on each of the fifteen questions, they wrote and asked him to visit again.

In January of 1961, nine were baptized into Christ and started meeting at Ostend. Eventually, fifteen of the original group became Christians.

Roeselare

In 1964 an insurance salesman in Roeselare decided to study the Bible. He had been a devoted Catholic all his life, but was disturbed by certain changes in the Church and by contradictory things being taught. When the parish priest could not give satisfactory answers, he decided to study the Bible for himself.

After hearing the Herald of Truth radio broadcast he wrote Phil Slate in England requesting a Bible correspondence course. When brother Slate learned that Roy Davison was moving to Flanders, he gave him the address of Jozef Denys in the summer of 1965.

In October of 1965, shortly after moving to Ostend, brother Davison sent Mr. Denys several tracts and offered to visit him if he had questions. Visits were made in November and December. He was not invited again until August of the next year, but study by correspondence had continued. After the August visit Mr. Denys wrote: *"In principle I am completely in agreement with the church of Christ: only the Bible gives us all the ans-*



The church in Roeselare itself provided the funds for this building in which it worships.

wers. But I have one big question: has Christ appointed a Pope (vicar) on earth?" Certainly this is the most important question in studying with Roman Catholics. If the Pope really has the authority which he claims for himself, we must listen to him. But when it is shown from the Scriptures that there is no place for a Pope in the kingdom of Christ, the entire Roman system falls. By examining the Scriptures and comparing them with the teachings of the Catholic church, Mr. Denys decided that Christ had not appointed a vicar on earth.

But that was only the beginning. As Mr. Denys said in his next letter: *"I have been completely persuaded that only the Bible may be followed and that no so-called Pope exists. But you must not think that I will suddenly throw all of the old overboard and gratuitously accept something new. Everything must be proved by the Bible. I must see everything documented, as I wish to build only on THE ROCK. May the Lord help me to do so."*

Then the real study began. Through letters and visits from brother Davison, hundreds of questions dealing with Roman doctrine were studied. Mrs. Denys also began taking an active interest in Bible study. They eventually realized that they had never been baptized in accordance with the testament of Christ. They became Christians in November of 1966. The first Sunday after they were baptized, they attended services in Ostend. The Sunday after that they began conducting services in their own home.

Bruges

The church in Bruges was begun in 1975 by Boyd and Nell Williams. They continued there until 1979, and have returned on various occasions to help with the work for short periods of time. Richard Amssoms regularly helps the congregation with its evangelistic efforts.

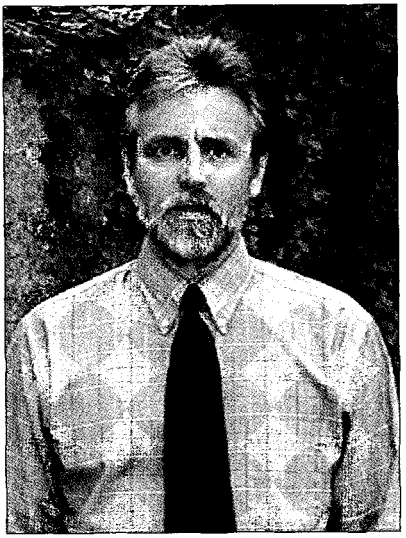
Antwerp

During 1970 and 1971 the church at Roeselare placed small want ads that went into all homes of Flanders (about 1.5 million copies). After testing various ads, a text was chosen that had been written by Jozef Denys: *"Being a Christian means to follow Christ without being bound to a denomination."* At that time Jozef Denys and Paul Huyghebaert were elders at Roeselare, and Roy Davison was evangelist. Brother Davison started going to Antwerp one day every two weeks for two regular Bible studies which resulted from these ads.

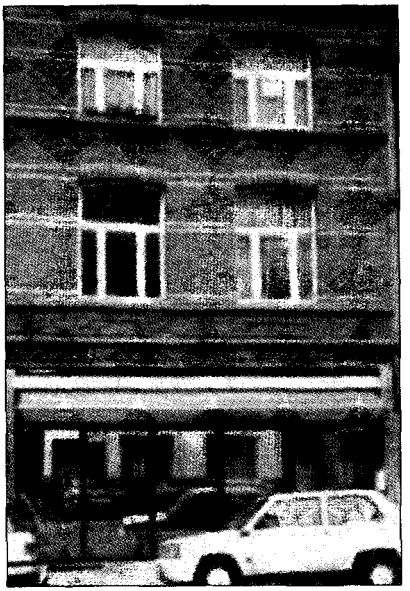
In October of 1971 Richard Amssoms wrote a letter stating that he and

several others had left the Jehovah's Witnesses because they were a worldly organization that did not follow the teachings of Christ.

The first time brother Davison visited their home, Mr. Amssoms said he had a very important question: *"Do you baptize for the forgiveness of sins?"* Brother Davison referred to Acts 2:38 and confirmed that we do indeed. Mr. Amssoms replied: *"Then I want to be baptized."* Through their personal Bible study they had learned that baptism must be for the remission of sins, and they were looking for someone who followed the Biblical pattern.



Paul Brazle has been working with the church in Antwerp since 1989.



The meeting place of the church in Antwerp.

Richard Amssoms and his wife Gilda were baptized into Christ in November of 1971 and began meeting in their home. Brother Davison began conducting weekly Bible studies in Antwerp. At the invitation of the Christians there, he and his family moved to the Antwerp area in 1972, where he preached until 1976, when they moved to establish a new congregation at Hasselt. For many years the church met in the home of brother Amssoms.

Starting in 1978, Blair Roberts, who had formerly worked with brother Davison in Antwerp as a student evangelist, began helping the

church in Antwerp on a regular basis although he lived at Leuven. In 1985 he and his family moved to Antwerp to work there full time. In 1991 they returned to Canada. Paul Brazle, who now preaches in Antwerp, began working there in 1989. The congregation is currently in the process of purchasing the building they have been renting. It is located near a freeway and is easily accessible from the entire area.

Rijmenam (formerly Boortmeerbeek)

In 1973 an engineer at Boortmeerbeek enrolled in a Bible correspondence course. As a devoted Catholic, he had started studying with Jehovah's Witnesses with the intention of defending his own faith. To do so, however, he had to read the Bible. Through his Bible study he was able to see the errors of the Jehovah's Witnesses, but he was surprised to notice that not everything he read in the Bible was in agreement with what he had been taught in the Catholic Church. He thought, *"Maybe I am misunderstanding something,"* so he discussed these points with fellow Catholics and priests. But the replies were not satisfactory. None of his fellow Catholics were able to defend what they believed on the basis of the Bible. In the meantime he had read the whole Bible, comparing various translations.

He showed a Bible course he had received from brother Davison to the Jehovah's Witness and ask him what was wrong with it. The Jehovah's Witness invited brother Davison to come and discuss the deity of Christ. Unable to defend their doctrine against the clear statements of Scripture, they suggested a debate between brother Davison and one of their members who "knew Greek". When that debate also did not go well for their position, they abruptly broke off all contact with brother Davison. But the engineer continued to study with him on his own.

About a year later, J. Van Dessel was baptized into Christ in his own basement, which happened to be flooded with water. For six months he attended services at Antwerp until brother Davison baptized another man in his area and the two of them began meeting for worship at Boortmeerbeek.

Many people have difficulty teaching the truth to their own family. Brother Van Dessel was able to teach and baptize his mother when she was 83, though she had been a devote Catholic all her life. He also baptized his brother. (His mother and brother have since gone on to be with the Lord.) He taught and baptized his wife, two sons and a daughter. He has baptized three of his sisters, a brother-in-law, a cousin, a niece and a nephew. He has, of course, also taught and baptized others who are not part of his family. The congregation now meets in the home of his daughter.

Hasselt

When the Davisons moved to the Hasselt area in 1976 they met in their home for a while until a room was rented in the Cultural Center in Hasselt, where the church still meets.

With help from students from Canada and the U.S., the entire city had been covered with literature, door-to-door, several times before they came. Brother Davison had already been studying for more than a year with a couple contacted through this literature. They introduced him to Tony Geens, an electronics technician, who had been searching for the truth for many years. He had studied with various groups and had investigated being baptized several times, but each time discovered false doctrine that prevented him from continuing. He was happy to learn that he could simply be baptized into Jesus Christ and become a Christian without having to join some denomination or sect. When Tony noticed that some of his neighbors were studying with Mormons, he asked if he could study with them too. They became Christians. Brother Davison worked with this congregation for more than ten years. At present brother Geens (who is now retired) and several other men, preach, teach and evangelize in the Hasselt area.

Rotselaar (near Leuven)

Mark Brazle, Larry Good and Blair Roberts started a congregation in the world-famous university city of Leuven in 1978. They had selected Leuven after making a door-to-door survey of several Flemish cities during the summer of 1976. Paul Brazle worked in Leuven from 1986 to 1989 (when he moved to work with the church at Antwerp). Mark Brazle and Larry Good left in 1993. In 1990 Richard Amssoms, the first man baptized at Antwerp, began preaching full-time for the congregation. He is a dynamic public speaker and is active in door-to-door evangelism. He drives to all parts of Flanders to conduct home Bible studies. He also regularly helps the churches in Bruges and Roeselare with evangelism.

French-Speaking Churches: Some History . . .

Verviers

During the Second World War a young Christian named Dennis Piety from Denver, Colorado was stationed at Pepinster, near Verviers. After the war he corresponded with a family there who had befriended him. Through

them another woman became interested in the church. After extended correspondence with Dennis, with Mrs. A. E. Perry and with her nephew, S. F. Timmerman, she asked to be baptized. Arrangements were made for a visit by Jacob Vandervis from Holland and Otis Gatewood from Germany. Several were baptized into the body of Christ and brother Vandervis worked with them until the summer of 1948, visiting about once a month.

S. F. Timmerman and his family moved to Pepinster, Belgium in the fall of 1948. He also worked with a group that began meeting in Liege.

After a series of evangelistic sermons was preached at Verviers in July of 1950, a group of Christians began meeting there. Brother Timmerman moved to work with the church at Verviers in 1952. At the beginning of 1955 the church at Pepinster merged with the congregation at Verviers. The church assembled in various rented halls for several years until a building was purchased at 50, rue Ortmans in 1966, where it still meets.

After the Timmermans left Verviers in 1961, the work was carried on by Don Taylor until 1970, when it was turned over to Jean-Marie Frerot, who still preaches there. About brother Frerot's conversion, S. F. Timmerman wrote: *"Jean-Marie Frerot, as a teen-ager, walked into our meeting place where I was working one afternoon in 1953. He expressed an interest in what we were doing and was invited to attend our services. This he began to do and was baptized in 1954. He also brought his father and mother to worship, and they, too, were baptized. Jean-Marie began to bring some of his friends, and soon a family unrelated to him was led to become Christians. He has served his home congregation as the local evangelist since 1970 and is much in demand for gospel meetings and lectures in all of French-speaking Europe, in French Africa, and the Caribbean."*

Of Suzanne, Jean-Marie's wife, Don Taylor wrote: *"We invited Suzanne, who was a very active Catholic youth leader, to attend the camp session at Solwaster. She finally agreed at the last possible minute to attend, but on condition that she attend the Catholic mass and that she would attend camp Bible class but would NOT participate. Jacques Marchal taught these classes. She couldn't help getting interested, however, and after the camp session she kept on studying the Bible. In 1967 she was baptized into Christ. Suzanne has been a force in the church since then, very active in every way. She works a lot with French World Bible School, teaching students in African countries as well as in Belgium and France."*

In 1999 Freed-Hardeman University of Henderson, Tennessee began using part of the Verviers building for their European extension program.

Liege

Christians began meeting at Liege when S. F. Timmerman and his family moved to Belgium in 1948. After meeting for a while in a private home, a public meeting place was rented in 1950. Donald Earwood worked in Liege from 1951 to 1953.

J. Lee and Margaret Roberts went to Liege in 1954 and were there until 1966. In 1958 Margaret's paralyzed mother went to live with them in Belgium, after her father died. She passed away three years later, and was buried at Liege. In 1962 a building was erected at 28, rue Lamarck, where the church still meets. Half of the cost was borne by the local congregation by paying off a loan, and half was contributed from elsewhere.

Joseph Salvatore came from Italy to Belgium to work in the coal mines. While he was ill, a neighbor who was a member of the Liege congregation gave him a New Testament. He said he wanted to prove by the Bible that



A Bible camp has been developed at Solwaster in the Ardennes Mountains. At first the facilities were very primitive and tents were used, but thanks to much volunteer work, two functional buildings have been constructed. Hundreds of children from Belgium and Holland have attended the camp through the years, many of whom were thus introduced to the teachings of Christ for the first time.

Catholicism was the correct religion of Christ. After reading the whole New Testament during his illness and discussing it with his neighbor, he asked to be baptized in 1955. Since then he has continued to be an ardent student of the Bible and a leader in the church.

Winfred Wright was in Liege from 1958 until 1960, when he went to Toulouse, France.

In 1966 the Roberts went to the U.S. for a nine-month working visit. While there they lost their support and were not able to return. They have gone to Belgium on various occasions since for special evangelistic efforts.

Andy Ritchie was at Liege in 1966 and 1967. Richard Wolfe preached there from 1974 to 1993. The work is presently being continued by local brethren, including Joseph Salvatore, Pierre Pacquet and Joseph Sparacino.

Brussels

The church in Brussels was begun by Donald Earwood and Hilton C. Terry in 1953. William Lemons worked from about 1954 until 1960 at Anderlecht, a suburb of Brussels. When the World's Fair was at Brussels in 1958, the church conducted special meetings, had a booth and distributed literature. A building was bought on Rue du Trone late in the 50's. When the Terrys left in 1961, S. F. Timmerman moved from Verviers to Brussels to continue that work, and remained there until 1964. The church has since been served by Ray M. Nelson (62-67), Al Waller (67-69), John Murphree (67-72), Randy Givens (79-89), Ron Hobbelman (78-82), Kenneth Wilson (91-95), and others.

In 1972 a leaflet was placed in the mailbox of Jean Ytebrouck offering a free Bible and a Bible course. After taking the course he started attending services but asked that he not be bothered about being baptized because he wanted to make his own decision without being pressured. In 1973 he was baptized into Christ and has been a zealous Christian and leader in the congregation since. He conducted a local radio broadcast in Brussels from 1981 to 1986.

The property at Rue du Trone was sold in 1988, and other property was purchased at 14, rue de la Royaute. Both the small French group and an English-speaking congregation share the use of this building at present.

La Docherie, Namur and Mons

A small congregation meets in La Docherie at 18, rue Castermont. Jean Van Herpe has provided local leadership for about 30 years. Extensive evangelism was done in Namur and Mons, but those cities no longer have congregations. Most Christians who met there have moved to other cities.

English-Speaking Churches: Some History . . .

Brussels, the capital of both Belgium and the European Union, is a multicultural city (40% of the population are not Belgian citizens and 60% are of non-Belgian ethnic origin). There are usually English-speaking Christians in Brussels temporarily with their work, and because many people use English as their language of communication there is a need for evangelism in English.

Since the 1980's there has been a separate English-language congregation in Brussels. Many active Christians from other countries have made a big contribution to the cause of Christ during their time in Brussels.

Ernest Eshun has preached for the English-language congregation since 1985. When he and Hawa came to Belgium, Hawa, who had been a Christian in Ghana, looked up the church of Christ. Before, Ernest had always refused to attend services with Hawa. He had been a lay-preacher in a denomination. But in Belgium he was willing to go with her and he learned the way of the Lord more accurately. To improve his effectiveness as an evangelist, he was taught special classes by Frank Parker, Odel Lee and Randy Givens. He also took extension courses by correspondence from Christian schools in the United States.

In 1986 Ernest began working full-time for the congregation (with part-time support). Ernest is an excellent speaker. He and Hawa both teach home Bible studies. Through the years Ernest has baptized about 120 people in Brussels, many of whom have moved on, and are now serving the Lord elsewhere. A former Moslem is preaching the Gospel in Ghana. Others are active members of congregations in other countries including Holland, England, Canada, Malaysia, Nigeria and the U.S. Ernest receives partial support from Christians in Belgium and Holland. Hawa cleans offices to help provide for their family of four children.

Robert Grigg, Sr. preached for the congregation together with Ernest from 1987 until 1993, and conducted an active program of personal evangelism. During that time he also helped the French-language congregation at La Docherie.

SHAPE

An English language congregation consisting of military personnel has met for many years at the base chapel of SHAPE near Mons. ✞

Dear Sirs:

☐ I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL. Enclosed is my check for $12.00 for four issues, or $20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____. ***My address is given below.***

☐ I want to order the complete set of volumes in print (28 issues) for the reduced price of $70.00. ***My address is given below.***

☐ *Please send special prices for WBS teachers and their students.*

☐ I want to MAKE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION of THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL. Enclosed is my check for $12.00 for four issues, or $20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____. ***The address is given below.***

☐ The church has agreed to send $25.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiples) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed. These are to be used in the work of the local church.

☐ This congregation is in a mission area of the USA. Please send one box of 35 copies of each issue, free of charge, for our use in personal evangelism.

☐ Please accept my check to send a bundle to our missionary. ***The address is given below.***

☐ As a congregation we want to help print and circulate 100,000 copies of each issue of this magazine by making a special contribution to this effort. We can specify where the copies we pay for will be used, whether in our personal work, in jail ministry, overseas, or . . .

☐ This congregation wants to have 1000 copies (for $1000 plus shipping) special-printed of the next issue, with our (our missionary's) address, to be shipped directly to us or to him, as per instructions.

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Suggested uses for individuals and churches for **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL:**

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- Give a copy to each member of the congregation.
- Draw from them for bulletin articles.
- Keep them on display in libraries, hospitals, doctors' offices, barber shops, beauty parlors, and other public places where there is a magazine rack.
- Send them to your WBS students.
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- Special order for overseas campaigns.

(Return this form in an envelope, along with your check, to the following address)

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
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Springfield, MO 65803

Att. Byron Nichols

Answers to Puzzles

Verse Search — 28 (from page 36)

1. The widows who were Hellenists, either Jews who had taken up citizenship in other countries, or Greeks who had become proselytes of Judaism before their conversion to Christianity.
2. To choose from among themselves seven men, full of the Holy Spirit, to look after those particular physical needs in the church.
3. Of good report and full of wisdom.
4. *"...but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*
5. They prayed and laid their hands on them.
6. The word of God spread, the number of Christians multiplied, and many priests obeyed.
7. The apostles are the only ones mentioned.
8. Great wonders and signs.
9. "Jews from various backgrounds who were members of a synagogue called "Synagogue of the Freedmen".
10. No.
11. Induced men to accuse him of blasphemy.
12. **Blasphemous words; Moses; God.**
13. ***The people, the elders, and the scribes.***
14. They seized him and brought him before the Sanhedrin Council (the Supreme Court of Judaism).
15. *"...blasphemous words against this holy place and the law...."*
16. That Jesus of Nazareth would destroy that place and change Moses' "customs".
17. The face of an angel.

Who Am I? (page 93)



Apollos

The Book of Revelation (page 58)

7 ✦ 7 ✦ 24 ✦ 24 ✦ 4 ✦ 6 ✦ 7 ✦ 4 ✦ 12,000 ✦ 5 ✦ 200,000,000 ✦ 42 ✦ 1,260 ✦ 7,000 ✦ 12 ✦ 10 ✦ 666 ✦ 144,000 ✦ 7 ✦ 12 ✦ 1

For further information, please contact:



Kingdom of Belgium



Government: Democracy With a Monarch
Head of State: King Albert II
Head of Government: Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt

Secular Facts:

Location: Western Europe; bordering the North Sea, The Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, and France; the geographic center of the European Union.

Land Mass: 11,787 Square miles; approximately the size of Maryland.

Population: 10,213,752; density per square mile, 867.

Major Cities: Brussels, Antwerp, Charleroi, Liege, Gent.

Language: Dutch, 56%; French, 32%; German, 1%; legally bilingual, 11%.

Literacy: 99%; education is free and compulsory.

Religion: Roman Catholic, 75%; Protestant or other, 25%.

Economy: *With few natural resources, Belgium's prosperity is based on trade, manufacturing and services. Industry is concentrated in the northern Flemish area. Raw materials are imported, and manufactured goods are exported.* ***Arable land:*** 24%. *Employment by sector: agriculture, 1.5%; industry, 28.2%; services, 70.3%.*

Monetary Unit: Euro

The Church:

Congregations: 13 congregations with total membership of approximately 250.

History: The church existed in Belgium in t first century, and Constantine used Tongeren as central point for "Christianizing" the surroundi area. During the Reformation Movemer Tyndale, who was believed to be a true Christia was first harbored and then arrested and execut in Belgium.

Today: During the 20th century, it was n until a visit by J.C. Vandervis from Holla and Otis Gatewood from Germany, that the were baptisms at Pepinster in 1947, marki the new beginning of the Lord's church Belgium. Dedicated missionaries followe S.F. Timmerman, Donald Earwood, Hilton Terry, Bill Richardson, Roy Davison, Bo Williams, Blair Roberts and Don Taylor. Pa Brazle and others, including local Christia (Jean-Marie Frerot, Richard Amssons, a Ernest Eshun), have taken up the responsib ties from these pioneers.

Bible correspondence courses and hor Bible studies are offered, and there is youth camp at Solwaster in the Ardenn Mountains.

Front Cover: **Statue of King Baudouin1 of Belgium, bowing in reverence. Picture, courtesy of Jo Crepain Architect Bureau, Antwerp.**